

NORTH KOREA: HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:15 a.m. in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James A. Leach [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. LEACH. The Committee will come to order. On behalf of the Subcommittee, I would like to warmly welcome our distinguished witnesses, many of whom have traveled from as far as Beijing and Seoul to be with us here today. We're honored by your presence.

In this regard I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the Republic of Korea, the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, and the U.S. Committee for Human Rights North Korea in helping to make this hearing possible.

The leadership of two Members who have been instrumental in developing this hearing should also be singled out. Representative Ed Royce who chairs the U.S. South Korean Inter-Parliamentary Exchange and Representative Mark Kirk, who traveled to North Korea as a former staff member for this Committee and recently chaired a Congressional Human Rights Caucus briefing on North Korea.

The purpose of today's hearing is to examine a trio of increasingly significant humanitarian and foreign policy issues that have arisen as a direct consequence of North Korea's inhumane and failed system of governance. All of which have important implications for the United States and the international community—refugees, acute food shortages, and human rights.

This hearing is particularly timely given the recent increase of North Korean asylum bids through western embassies in Beijing. It also takes place against the sensitive diplomatic backdrop of renewed North-South dialogue, tentative steps toward re-engagement between Tokyo and Pyongyang, and the planned resumption of high-level dialogue between the United States and the DPRK.

Congress hopes and expects that North Korea will seize this opportunity to demonstrate its sincerity through negotiations and begin to alleviate the concerns of the world community. As we've all come to understand, awareness of the plight of North Korean refugees is rising dramatically. A series of high-profile instances in China, including in the last week two North Korean refugees gaining entry into the United States Embassy and the arrest of three

asylum seekers outside the South Korean Embassy, has brought unprecedented exposure to a searing human rights tragedy largely heretofore hidden from the West.

The basic facts are as follows—the refugee issue first surfaced in connection with the appalling condition of DPRK contract laborers in Siberia. By the mid-1990s, with economic collapse and natural disasters combining to create famine conditions in the North that may have claimed as many as 2 million lives, the focus shifted to China. Over the last several years, somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 North Koreans have crossed into northeastern China, a region with a large and welcoming community of ethnic Koreans.

Most of the North Koreans are in search of either food or work. Many have evidently criss-crossed the border several times. In recent years some refugees who have been repatriated to North Korea actually managed to escape and return to China. Of this group an unknown number have suffered harsh punishment at the hands of the secret police, causing them to turn against the DPRK regime and therefore giving rise to well-founded fear of persecution should they be forcibly returned by the PRC to North Korea.

The PRC's reaction to the influx of North Koreans appears to fluctuate between placid tolerance and violent bouts of repression. As a matter of principle, Beijing maintains that the North Koreans are economic migrants. In practice, however, local authorities have allowed NGOs to assist refugees in China and even turned a blind eye to NGO efforts to facilitate their asylum to South Korea through third countries, provided such activities remain low-profile.

But Beijing also orders periodic crackdowns against the refugees and those who assist them, and by some reports may even allow DPRK agents to conduct operations in northeastern China.

While the flow of refugees in north China may be more stable than in years past, the number of defectors arriving in Seoul, while small in absolute numbers, is growing at an impressive rate. The flow of North Korean asylum-seekers has surged from 149 in 1999, to 312 in 2000, to 583 last year, and this year defections are occurring in an accelerated rate. Because North Korea cannot feed itself, U.N. agencies have become responsible for feeding almost a third of the country's 23 million people.

A compassionate and global response to U.N. appeals for food and medical donations will almost certainly be needed to help protect women, children, and others at risk.

Finally, as to human rights, it should be clear that the North Korean regime is an abomination. Its policy stands as an affront to the most basic standards of human decency. President Bush is precisely correct to note that North Korea is starving its people while developing weapons of mass destruction. Yet, he has been careful to observe that America has "great sympathy and empathy for the North Korean people. We want them to have food." The President has noted strongly, "We want them to have freedom."

How the U.S. and the world community can most effectively express its sympathy and concern for the North Korean people, including refugees in China, is the single issue before us today. In this context we look forward to the testimony of our panelists, several of whom are outside experts, others survivors of some of the

most challenging rigors of the human condition. Mr. Faleomavaega?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Leach follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES A. LEACH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IOWA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I would like to warmly welcome our distinguished witnesses, many of whom have traveled from as far as Beijing and Seoul to be with us here today. We are honored by your presence. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the Republic of Korea, the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, and U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea in helping to make this hearing possible. The leadership of two Members who have been instrumental in developing this hearing should also be singled out: Representative Ed Royce, who chairs the US-South Korean Inter-parliamentary Exchange, and Representative Mark Kirk, who traveled to North Korea as a former staff member for this Committee and recently chaired a Congressional Human Rights Caucus briefing on North Korea.

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The basic facts are as follows. The refugee issue first surfaced in connection with the appalling condition of DPRK contract laborers in Siberia. By the mid-1990s, with economic collapse and natural disasters combining to create famine conditions in the North that may have claimed as many as two million lives, the focus shifted to China. Over the last several years, somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 North Koreans have crossed into northeastern China, a region with a large and welcoming community of ethnic Koreans. Most of the North Koreans are in search of either food or work. Many have evidently criss-crossed the border several times. In recent years some refugees who have been repatriated to North Korea actually managed to escape and return to China. Of this group, an unknown number have suffered harsh punishment at the hands of the secret police, causing them to turn against the DPRK regime and therefore giving rise to a well-founded fear of persecution should they be forcibly returned by the PRC to North Korea.

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Because North Korea cannot feed itself, UN agencies have become responsible for feeding almost one-third of the country's 23 million people. A compassionate global response to UN appeals for food and medical donations will almost certainly be needed to help protect women, children and others at risk.

Finally, as to human rights, it should be clear that the North Korean regime is an abomination. Its policies stand as an affront to the most basic standards of human decency. President Bush is precisely correct to note that North Korea is starving its people while developing weapons of mass destruction. Yet he has also been careful to observe that America has "great sympathy and empathy for the North Korean people. We want them to have food . . . We want them to have freedom."

How the U.S. and the world community can most effectively express its sympathy and concern for the North Korean people, including refugees in China, is the signal issue before us today. In this context, we look forward to the testimony of our panelists, several of whom are outside experts, others survivors of some of the most challenging rigors of the human condition.

Mr. FALCOMA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to commend you for calling this hearing today to shed light on the tragic humanitarian plight of the North Korean people who labor under one of the repressive, totalitarian regimes in the world, the government of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished panel of witnesses; especially, those who have traveled from overseas to share their personal experiences with the Members of our Committee.

Mr. Chairman, many have advocated that the people of North Korea are the least free people on earth. As over the past 4 decades, they have been denied the most basic of human rights. They have been isolated from one another and they have been cut off from the world by their government. Moreover, due to their government's disastrous agricultural and economic policies, which have been compounded by natural disaster, the North Korean people have suffered through a brutal famine that has killed well over a million, perhaps, up to 3 million of their own fellow citizens and left a generation of children physically and mentally stunted.

Mr. Chairman, the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights and Labor, Lorne Craner, has recently testified that the North Korean government is among the most repressive regimes in the world. The closed nature of the North Korean regime makes it difficult to obtain information on the conditions inside that country. But the reports that make it out paint a shocking, often horrifying picture of brutality, opposition, injustice and depravation.

In North Korea individual rights are considered subversive to the goals of the state and the party. There is no tolerance for criticism of the state or its leaders. And accordingly, no freedom of expression, assembly or belief. The regime uses extreme repression and a pervasive surveillance network to intimidate and instill fear in the population. It maintains control through terror, threat of severe punishment and the manipulation of privileges, including the privilege of food allotments.

Given these terrible conditions in North Korea, Mr. Chairman, it's not surprising that tens of thousands of refugees, many of them malnourished women and children, have fled their homeland for northeast China. It is estimated that well over 150,000 North Korean refugees currently live in China dreading forceful repatriation that would result in imprisonment, torture or execution.

On the issue of food aid, I'm proud of the World Food Program and resident NGOs that are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance on the ground in North Korea. Due in part to their ef-

forts, the North Korean people are continuing a fragile recovery from the famine crisis of 1997. While better monitoring of food and aid distribution to prevent diversion still remains an important objective. Much of the aid provided over the years has no doubt been effective in significantly reducing the numbers of North Koreans starving to death; especially within the targeted populations of children and women.

Mr. Chairman, I'm proud that our nation has continued to play a major donor role in coming to the assistance of the long-suffering people of North Korea. This year alone the United States has contributed 155,000 metric tons of food to North Korea. On that point, the Administration should be commended for continuing to separate issues of humanitarian assistance from the conflicts with the government of North Korea over weapons of mass destruction, conventional military forces and other matters.

Clearly, the innocent and powerless people of North Korea should not be condemned to starvation and made victims because of an unstable leadership they had no choice in choosing.

Concluding, Mr. Chairman, I'm heartened by the offer yesterday from Kim Jong-Il to re-engage with negotiations with Washington. And I'm hopeful that Ambassador Jack Pritchard will be able to travel soon to North Korea to start addressing the full range of complex issues our nation has with North Korea.

And with that Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the opportunity of hearing from our witnesses this morning. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Faleomavaega follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

Mr. Chairman:

I commend you for calling this hearing today to shed light on the tragic humanitarian plight of the North Korean people, who labor under one of the most oppressive totalitarian regimes in the world, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

I would also extend a warm welcome to our distinguished panel of witnesses, especially to those who have traveled from overseas to share their personal experiences with our Committee.

Mr. Chairman, many have advocated that the people of North Korea are the least free people on earth, as over the past four decades they have been denied the most basic of human rights, they have been isolated from one another, and they have been cutoff from the world by their government. Moreover, due to their government's disastrous agricultural and economic policies, which have been compounded by natural disasters, the North Korean people have suffered through a brutal famine that has killed well over a million, perhaps up to three million, of their fellow citizens and left a generation of children physically and mentally stunted.

According to the 2001 State Department Human Rights Report on North Korea, "The Government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit numerous serious abuses. Citizens do not have the right to peacefully change their government. There continued to be reports of extrajudicial killings and disappearances. Citizens are detained arbitrarily, and many are held as political prisoners; prison conditions are harsh . . . The regime subjects its citizens to rigid controls. The leadership perceives most international norms of human rights, especially individual rights, as illegitimate, alien, and subversive . . . The Government prohibits freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and association . . . The Government restricts freedom of religion, citizen's movements, and worker rights."

To this effect, the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Lorne Craner, has recently testified, "The DPRK is among the most repressive regimes in the world. The closed nature of the North Korean regime makes it difficult to obtain information on the conditions inside the country. But the reports that make it out paint a shocking, often horrifying, picture of brutality, oppression, injustice and deprivation . . . In North Korea, individual rights are considered sub-

versive to the goals of the State and Party . . . There is no tolerance for criticism of the State or its leader and accordingly no freedom of expression, assembly or belief . . . The regime uses extreme repression and a pervasive surveillance network to intimidate and instill fear in the population. It maintains control through terror, threat of severe punishment and the manipulation of privileges, including the 'privilege' of food allotments."

Given these terrible conditions in North Korea, Mr. Chairman, it is not surprising that tens of thousands of refugees—many of them malnourished women and children—have fled their homeland for northeast China. It is estimated that over 150,000 North Korean refugees currently live in China, dreading forcible repatriation that would result in imprisonment, torture or execution. It is reprehensible that China, a party to the U.N. Refugee Convention of 1951, continues to deny UNHCR access to the border areas and assists DPRK security agents in pursuing and forcibly returning North Korean refugees. I am particularly troubled by horror stories that some of the refugees returned have been led away like cattle, with wires forced through their noses and tied together.

On the issue of food aid, I applaud the World Food Program (WFP) and resident NGO's that are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance on the ground in North Korea. Due in part to their efforts, the North Korean people are continuing a fragile recovery from the famine crisis of 1997. While better monitoring of food aid distribution to prevent diversion still remains an important objective, much of the aid provided over the years has no doubt been effective in significantly reducing the numbers of North Koreans starving to death, especially with the targeted populations of children and women.

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In concluding, I am heartened by the offer yesterday from Pyongyang to reengage in negotiations with Washington, and I am hopeful that Ambassador Jack Pritchard will be able to travel soon to the DPRK to start addressing the full range of complex issues our Nation has with North Korea.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to briefly comment and I look forward to the testimony of our distinguished witnesses.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much. Mr. Royce?

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to commend you for holding this hearing. I guess it was several months ago——

Mr. LEACH. If you will yield, this was at your request and I'm delighted that you made that request.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, thank you.

Mr. LEACH. I appreciate very much the leadership you've shown.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, I thank you. I appreciated the meeting we had with Congressman Kirk where we discussed the plight of the North Korean refugees, and so you've made this hearing a reality. I think, as we'll hear today, the so-called Hermit Kingdom is one of the most brutal regimes that exists on this planet.

As we have found out and as Congressman Kirk has found out, the elite there live in luxury while the people are starving. North Korea is, thus, one of the greatest humanitarian disasters that we face. And I want to thank all of the witnesses that are going to come here before us today on both panels because some of those witnesses endured great pain, great suffering, and they also demonstrated the greatest bravery.

This Subcommittee, I believe, is doing a great service by bringing attention to the nightmare that is North Korea for many, many people that are in that country that are starving as we speak.

Last year, along with Congressman Becerra, who co-Chairs the U.S.-Republic of Korea Inter-Parliamentary Exchange with me, and I introduced a resolution—House Concurrent Resolution 213, which addresses the plight of North Koreans, and especially, of the refugees of North Korea. This resolution came out of Exchange discussions that we had last summer with our South Korean colleagues. We each discussed the question of who is going to respond to this refugee crisis. What is the world going to do about this humanitarian obligation?

The resolution we developed calls on the Chinese government to honor its international obligations to honor the U.N. convention relating to the status of refugees of 1951 by providing asylum to North Korean refugees. It also calls on Beijing to cooperate with the UNHCR to resettle these refugees in third countries.

Unfortunately, as we'll surely hear today, China is cooperating at this moment instead with North Korean authorities as they hunt down these refugees and subject them to the most brutal treatment imaginable, and we'd like to bring some international pressure to bear to change that.

While the Chinese government's actions I think come as no surprise, we should continue to bring all the attention that we can to the issue of these refugees, and we should continue to urge Chinese cooperation to bring these refugees to safe ground.

China is not immune to international pressure. So I would hope that this Committee would consider building on this hearing by moving this resolution, which is co-sponsored by several Members of the Committee, including Congressman Faleomavaega from American Samoa and Congressman Kirk of Chicago and myself.

So again, I thank you for this hearing in the interest of a very just humanitarian cause, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Mr. Chabot, did you want to make any opening statement?

Mr. CHABOT. I'll be very brief, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you also for calling this hearing. And I just coincidentally happened over the last week just finish a book called the Aquariums of Pyongyang written by Kang Chol-Hwan, who spent 10 years, from the age of 9 until the age of 19 in one of the camps—Camp Yodok. I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that correctly. It's Y-O-D-O-K, and it's called 10 Years in the North Korean Gulag.

The story he tells is shocking. The brutality is really unbelievable—the inhumanity, the absence of basic human rights. After being released from the camp, he subsequently escaped to the South and talks about it, but still has friends and family members and others and it's a shocking story that in the 21st Century that this sort of brutality is ongoing.

Again, I just want to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing and look forward to doing whatever we can to one day hopefully make those lives, which far too often they just live in the most unspeakable brutality imaginable. But it's just totally inappropriate for human beings to be treated as those human beings were. I appreciate the Chairman holding this hearing and I look forward to hearing the testimony this morning.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you, Mr. Chabot. Mr. Kirk?

Mr. KIRK. Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the invitation for a non-Committee Member. I also want to thank Mr. Faleomavaega and Mr. Royce and my other colleagues.

As a staff member of this Committee, I spent quite a lot of time in North Korea, both in 1997 and '98. I visited six major regions of North Korea, about 50 counties, all the way from Hui Jong on the Chinese border to Songgwan, near the DMZ.

I also want to commend Doug Anderson of this Committee staff who just spent, 4 weeks ago, a trip along the Chinese border looking at these issues. Mr. Chairman, I believe that we have seen over the last 5 years a silent massacre in North Korea. I estimate that approximately 2 million people have starved to death in North Korea since U.S. food assistance was started to alleviate the suffering there.

The suffering there is confirmed, not just by my visits and those of others to North Korea, but also of refugees who come over the border to China. The faces of this famine are clear. I met a young girl, Koch Kim Chin, in Hui Jong City Hospital. She was 1 year old and weighed just 11 pounds. In the Hui Jong Hospital Number 1, the following year, I met Kim Hui Bong, age 11, and she weighed just 35 pounds.

When we think of North Korea, we think of missiles and other military maneuvers, but the Korea that I saw was a Korea without any windshield glass for trucks. It was easy to see a North Korean truck driver because he would have bugs in his teeth. The DPRK government has blamed this famine on wind, on floods, on rain, but really it's the government policy there. Korea has never fed itself. It has always survived off of food traded for goods from other countries and in the autocratic policy of today, Korea cannot feed itself.

Despite President Bush's characterization of North Korea as one of the axis of evil, the United States remains the number one donor of food to North Korea. The U.S. is the number one donor of food to North Korea. We feed every child in North Korea under the age of 15, 21 million meals a day, and I think we need to enhance that program. We need to bring U.S. NGOs and U.S. NGO consortium back to Pyongyang to be partners with the world's food program.

We do all this under Ronald Reagan's theme articulated during the Ethiopian famine that a hungry child knows no politics. But I think we should do more. We should help out the refugees in China. They are sometimes called Ggotjaebi, black swallows. I met many of them. The refugee children in Yanji in the province which contains 2 million ethnic Koreans. It's there that those kids survive on scraps dropped from the marketplace stalls.

There are over 200,000 North Koreans in China. I've started my own effort with my neighbors in Chicagoland. We have formed the Korean-American Coalition of the Midwest. Recently, Kraft has agreed to join our effort in our own privately-funded assistance plan for North Korea. We will aid Korea in our own way, but we're also looking for something from the DPRK on non-proliferation, yes, but especially, on reunification.

South Koreans are able to see their North Korean relatives in very limited numbers. But Korean Americans have been totally unable to see their North Korean relatives. We estimate that there are 500,000 American citizens who have relatives in North Korea.

I was very happy when Secretary Powell accepted their petition, now totalling 50,000 signatures to make sure that the reunification of Korean-Americans with their relatives in North Korea is accepted.

Mr. Chairman, I also think we need a new assistance project, and this is based on the suggestions of the Czech President, Vaclav Havel, who saw the powerful evidence by video cameras given to dissents within his country that recorded what happened. I think the United States and private sector parties should fund video cameras give to refugees in China to then take back into North Korea to document what is happening there. This will boost our assistance efforts and it will also boost our efforts to promote human rights in North Korea.

To everyone in the room, I say (Alionsayhow) and thank you for holding this hearing.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you, Mark. Mr. Green, did you want to make an opening statement?

Well, at this point, let me turn to our panelists. Let me introduce Mr. Jasper Becker, was until this Monday, the Beijing Bureau Chief for the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* newspaper. He is a journalist and the author of acclaimed books on China, including *The Chinese* and *Hungry Ghosts*, an account of the great Chinese famine of the last century.

Ms. Sophie Delaunay is a regional coordinator for North Korea for Doctors without Borders, a respected humanitarian NGO.

Mr. John Powell is the regional director for the Asia region for the World Food Program. Mr. Powell recently returned from a 2-week mission inside North Korea.

Mr. Timothy Peters is the founder and director of both Helping Hands Korea and a Ton-a-Month Club, two Seoul-based humanitarian organizations that attempt to provide assistance to North Koreans living both outside and inside North Korea, respectively.

We'll begin with the order of introduction with Mr. Becker. And let me also ask if Mr. Young Lim, who is the translator for the witnesses that are here, if he could meet in the back of the room with staff. That would be appreciated. Thank you very much.

Mr. Becker, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JASPER BECKER, FORMER BEIJING BUREAU CHIEF, SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Mr. BECKER. Thank you very much for inviting me. I started writing about the North Korean famine just after I'd finished a book which looks at what happened in China during the great famine in the early '60s, and it became apparent from interviewing refugees inside China that this was an enormous famine because you had all the same signs that demonstrated the enormous scale of the famine China.

The North Koreans invited the international community to help with the famine in 1995. But actually, it seemed that the famine started much earlier than that, and from the people that I'd spoken to, it seemed that famine began actually in the mid-1980s after collapse of some very big agricultural projects that the North Koreans had attempted after 1980. And food rations began to get shorter and short.

And already in the early '90s, I think they asked for a World Food Program team to come in because they were already then thinking of calling for international aid. This means that many of the people in North Korea have been on starvation rations really for over 12 years. And they've been living on food substitutes, much as people did in China during the early 1960s.

Even after 7 years of food aid, the World Food Program said that in March people were just being distributed 300 grams of food a day when people should be getting at least 500 grams. And you can see the evidence of the famine in the malnourished children who would come over the border and beg on the streets in Yanji and other parts of Chongjin province.

They look incredibly stunted. People who say they are age 19 or 20 look like they are 12. All the evidence suggests that these children who cross over are quite representative of the majority of children in North Korea who have grown up with long famine food shortages.

The big question as always in a famine is how many people have died, and there are very few statistics which are made available from the North Koreans, but it could be as high as 4 million people; perhaps, as much as a quarter of a population according to some sources.

Not only is, therefore, the North Korean famine unique in terms of the impact on this population, but it's also unique in its duration. Most severe famines just last a couple of years, but this has now been going on now for, I would say, a decade.

The other question is which people have been most affected? Which are the people who have died in North Korea? According to the refugees, there are sort of different ways of looking at this, but one way is that most of the people who died first are those who belong to the classes which were considered less reliable, less politically loyal to the regime.

As you probably know, the North Korean population is divided up into classes according to their political loyalty. This determination—this labeling also meant that those who are labeled disloyal would be the last in line for food. So these people have been the most vulnerable.

Secondly, many of the refugees also say that the hardest hit areas have been those on the east coast, which have traditionally relied on surplus food being delivered from the area around Pyongyang on the west coast. There are also stories that the food is being deliberately withheld from some areas in order to punish these areas for staging anti-government protest or rebellions or even military uprisings. Again, this is very hard to verify.

The third peculiarity of the North Korean famine is that it's not been the rural areas, the poorer areas which have been hardest hit, but it's often been the urban residents who have been hardest hit because they haven't been getting food through the distribution system and because they haven't been able to function normally because of the economic collapse. So most of the factories were closed.

This, in turn, has led to another common phenomenon in a big famine, a big movement of population when people leave their homes in search of food. Many people have left the cities to go to the countryside to try and grow their own food. But also, a lot of

people have been going to China during the last 7 or 8 years to beg for food or to borrow money from their relatives there.

The border, which I've been along many times, is quite open and is quite easy to cross. The fact that for the first time since the founding of North Korea, many people have been able to leave North Korea and to speak freely means that the refugees have provided a very unusual fund of knowledge and testimony about what actually goes on in North Korea. They have been able to explain the causes of the famine to demonstrate that the famine is not caused by natural processes. That the food distribution is somewhat different from that described by the World Food Program and many of the aid workers operating in North Korea.

They've also borne witness to the brutality of the regime. The violent punishments which have been introduced in order to keep the population under control—a desperate population under control. Although the Chinese government, the central government, has been launching these quite tough campaigns to round up people who have been living amongst the North Korean population in China, the local population—the ethnic Koreans have done a great deal to help their relatives and to help them escape and to keep, really, large numbers of people alive, even though, they, themselves, are extremely poor.

But the real sort of question mark that I think the refugees have raised is really what has gone with the aid relief effort. It's been one of the largest and longest ever undertaken by the international aid community. Their testimony has contradicted many of the statements by the World Food Program and its officials. They've often denied that they've seen this food aid distributed. They've said that it hasn't been going to the most vulnerable parts of the population and they continue to assert that the favorite members of the regime and the party—the army and the police and so on—have been the ones who are benefitting from this aid.

This brings me to another point which I think is very relevant. The food aid has partly been a failure because it's being used as a bargaining chip to negotiate security issues with North Korea. It hasn't been used successfully to allow the humanitarian organizations—the NGOs, the WFP to do their job properly to go out and monitor that the food is going to the right people.

Secondly, the food aid has been a failure because its failed to be used to push the North Korean government into carrying out the essential economic reforms which would make the population self-sufficient in food and to revive the economy.

That leads one to the final conclusion that the international community is actually been failing the North Korea people. Although, many countries have been extremely generous, it hasn't actually led to an end to the famine, which I believe is still going on. And although the weakest part of the population has already died, I think a large number of people in North Korea are still extremely vulnerable and very short of food.

The final point I wanted to make is the relief effort and the international negotiations with the Korean government have failed and that leads one to a conclusion to ask whether the real solution to this problem is that the regime itself has to be replaced. And

until that has happened, it is difficult to see how this famine is ever going to be resolved. Thank you very much.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you, Mr. Becker. And let me say, without objection, all of our statements will be fully placed in the record. So if you want to summarize, you are welcome to do that. Ms. Delaunay?

**STATEMENT OF SOPHIE DELAUNAY, NORTH KOREAN
PROJECT REPRESENTATIVE, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES**

Ms. DELAUNAY. Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me the opportunity to testify before you in the name of Medecins Sans Frontieres or what you know as Doctors Without Borders or MSF and share with you our experience and understanding of the crisis affecting the North Korean people.

As you know, MFS ran medical and nutrition programs inside North Korea from 1995 to 1998. Convinced that our aid was not reaching those most in need, MFS made the painful decision to withdraw from North Korea in September '98.

Since then, our organization has remained deeply concerned about the situation inside the country, and explored alternative ways to reach the most needy. So today, I would like to say that we share most of the opinions which have been expressed by Jasper Becker today regarding the humanitarian situation in North Korea.

I would like to address two fundamental concerns regarding this situation of the North Korean people. The first one is the lack of access of the most vulnerable population in North Korea to international aid. The second concern is the lack of protection and assistance for North Korean refugees.

Regarding the first point on the lack of access of the most vulnerable, to this date, the vast majority of refugees who MFS has interviewed say they have never received food aid. Anyone who has sat and talked with these refugees would find it really difficult to believe the assurance of the WFP, which is reporting that aid is saving millions of lives. That they have access to the people and that they know where the aid is going.

According to the refugees, as Jasper mentioned, after a decade-long food shortage in the country, those who remain are the survivors and only the strongest have learned to cope. Even population groups, such as children, pregnant women and the elderly who are specifically targeted by the WFP for assistance are being denied food distribution.

In February 2002, an MSF team met with 12 North Korean children between the age of 6 and 15. These children had recently arrived in China. None of them had ever received food at primary school. According to them, pupils have to bring their own lunch from home. The same month a woman from Hyesan told us that, as a pregnant woman she was not entitled to any aid from the government. She was 1 month from delivery and was forced to cross the border at night in sub-zero temperatures to get some help. And in the same line several elderly people, who MFS interviewed, who belonged to the WFP target population, said they also did not benefit from any assistance.

For MSF, the testimonies of North Korean refugees raise serious questions about the way humanitarian assistance is delivered in North Korea. From our point of view, two major weaknesses in the relief programs favor the exclusion of vulnerable populations from the aid system. Those weaknesses are, first, the use of Public Distribution System or PDS to channel food aid; and the second is the quality of monitoring food aid.

As to the Public Distribution System, Jasper explained to you in North Korean society the three class labels, which are “core,” “wavering,” and “hostile” continue to be used to prioritize entitlement to items distributed to the PDS. Everyone in North Korea, with the exception of cooperative farmers, depends on the PDS for the basic food rations. Therefore, vulnerability and need have more to do with political and social standing than age and gender. Age and gender is the criteria which is used by aid organizations to define target beneficiaries.

Since '98, MSF has denounced the fact that any assistance which was channeled through the PDS was discriminatory by nature. We still believe that by using the PDS as the distribution channel for assistance, organizations are collaborating in organized government discrimination against its own citizens.

As with regard to the PDS and its function, according to individuals we have interviewed ordinary urban residents cannot rely on the PDS for their survival, and they are forced to find alternative ways to obtain food. Erratic for years, the PDS came to a virtual standstill in the late '90s with meager distribution on major national holidays.

The second weakness that we would like to question is the quality of monitoring food aid. MFS believes that after 7 years of massive international assistance to North Korea, monitoring conditions remain unacceptable. North Korea still does not provide the complete list of beneficiary institutions and WFP teams are still barred from making spot checks. The transparency of field inspections can also be questioned. You can see in the testimonies at the end of these document that some refugees have witnessed U.N. visits and their testimonies raise questions over the way field inspections are organized, if not staged, by the North Korean partners.

From its experience and understanding of the North Korean system, MSF would like to reiterate that access by the population to the aid it needs can only be improved if there are independent needs assessments, independent distribution mechanisms, and independent monitoring by operating agencies.

As with regard to the second concern we would like to address today, it's the lack of protection and assistance for North Korean refugees.

Once outside North Korea, challenges remaining for North Koreans seeking refuge outside. Most North Korean refugees don't even contemplate reaching the South. Instead, they cross the border into China in search of food for their families or for themselves or in search of a temporary job that will allow them to buy medicine or essential goods. These refugees live in a very precarious situation in China and they are in urgent need of assistance. Considered illegal migrants, they live in hiding and face the risk of being arrested

at any time, then forcefully repatriated, and then subject to severe punishment in North Korea.

Fines and rewards discouraging Chinese citizens from assisting them and recent arrests of NGO workers illustrate how impossible it is to adequately provide effective humanitarian assistance there. Numerous discussions between the MSF and the UNHCR about the need for protection have not proved fruitful. July 2001 calls by MSF on the Chinese authorities to cease forced repatriations and allow humanitarian assistance for the refugees have not been answered. The ongoing repression of North Korean refugees and of those who assist them limits the scope of our humanitarian operation on the Sino-Korean border. You have to know that there may soon be no more refugees to tell you about North Korea.

As a conclusion, we would like to say the need for assistance to the North Korean people is acknowledged. However, the testimonies of North Korean refugees confirm that despite this international relief assistance going into the country, a significant segment of the population remains in a precarious food situation.

These testimonies also suggest that humanitarian assistance is not primarily directed at, nor reaching the most vulnerable.

Médecins Sans Frontières expresses its grave concern over the endless suffering of the North Korean people and urges aid agencies operating inside North Korea to improve their monitoring and be responsible for the population they are entrusted to assist.

A second concern addresses the dire plight of North Koreans seeking refuge in China. Médecins Sans Frontières urges UNHCR and the Chinese government to open a dialogue leading to ensuring protection of North Korean refugees in China and to authorizing the provision of emergency assistance to the refugee population.

Thank you for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Delaunay follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SOPHIE DELAUNAY, NORTH KOREAN PROJECT
REPRESENTATIVE, MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to testify before you in the name of Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), and share with you our experience and understanding of the crisis affecting North Koreans in need of food assistance inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as well as of the plight of North Korean refugees in China.

MSF operated inside North Korea from 1995 to 1998. During this time, MSF attempted to supply drugs and provide medical training for approximately 1100 health centers, and to run 60 therapeutic feeding centers for malnourished children in three provinces of the country. Convinced that, despite the best efforts of our field teams, our aid was not reaching those most in need of aid as intended, MSF made the painful decision to withdraw from North Korea in September 1998. Since then, MSF has remained deeply concerned about the situation inside North Korea and explored alternative ways to reach the most needy.

MSF derives its current understanding of the humanitarian situation in North Korea from the following sources:

- North Korean refugees in China
- North Korean refugees in third countries
- Aid workers providing cross-border assistance

Today, I would like to address two fundamental concerns regarding the disastrous humanitarian situation of the North Korean people.

- The lack of access of the most vulnerable populations in North Korea to international aid
- The lack of protection and assistance for North Korean refugees

LACK OF ACCESS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS INSIDE NORTH KOREA TO
INTERNATIONAL AID

In October 2001, I described to a 40 year-old North Korean refugee how MSF used to provide aid in North Korea. After listening to my explanation, he smiled at me and said, *"You cannot reach people like this . . . You can't reach the common people."*

His comment illustrates the striking discrepancy in information between aid agencies present in North Korea and aid workers assisting North Korean refugees about whether aid is reaching its intended targets. This has been a characteristic of the North Korean crisis for the past 7 years. MSF itself experienced such a divergence when in 1998, the extent of the famine described by the refugees that MSF met on the Chinese border could not be observed by its teams operating in the DPRK. This was due to the restrictions imposed by the North Korean government on the ability of aid organizations to independently assess humanitarian needs.

To this day, the vast majority of refugees who MSF has interviewed say they have never received food aid. This includes those belonging to the target beneficiaries of the United Nations program. Anyone who has sat and talked with these refugees would find it difficult to believe the assurances of the World Food Program (WFP), which is reporting that aid is saving millions of lives, and that they have access to monitor and know where the aid is going.

North Korea has been one of the largest recipients of food aid in the world for a number of years, yet it is still a great challenge for vulnerable populations to access food. Despite increased border controls, some North Koreans, mostly from the northern provinces, continue to cross into China in search of the means to survive. According to the refugees MSF has interviewed, the food situation remains critical for most of the ordinary people in North Korea. In their own words, after a decade-long food shortage in the country, those who remain are survivors and only the strongest have learned to cope.

Even population groups such as children, pregnant women, and the elderly, who are specifically targeted by the WFP for assistance, are being denied food distribution. In February 2002, an MSF team met with 12 North Korean children between the ages of 6 and 15 who had recently arrived in China. None of them had ever received food at primary school. According to them, pupils have to bring their own lunch from home. Children are often unable to attend school because they are simply too weak or too busy providing for their own sustenance. The same month, a woman from Hyesan told us that, as a pregnant woman she was not entitled to any aid from the government. She was one month from delivery and was forced to cross the border at night in sub-zero temperatures to get some help. Several elderly people who MSF interviewed, who belonged to the WFP target population, said they also did not benefit from any assistance.

Testimonies from refugees and aid workers who are carrying out cross-border assistance largely deny that farmers are better off and can benefit from the crops they grow. A bad harvest combined with a required quota deducted by the government does not leave much for the rural populations to rely on. Despite the irregular functioning of the Public Distribution System in urban areas, it seems that cities offer survival alternatives that cannot be found in rural areas, including widespread black markets.

For MSF, the testimonies of North Korean refugees raise serious questions about the way humanitarian assistance is delivered in North Korea. From our point of view, two major weaknesses in the relief programs favor exclusion of vulnerable populations from the aid system. Those weaknesses are:

- The use of the Public Distribution System (PDS) to channel food aid; and,
- The quality of monitoring food aid.

THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

In North Korean society, the three class labels—"core," "wavering," and "hostile"—continue to be used to prioritize access to jobs, region of residence, and entitlement to items distributed through the Public Distribution System (PDS). Everyone in North Korea, with the exception of cooperative farmers, depends on the PDS for the basic food rations they require for survival. Therefore, vulnerability and need have more to do with political and social standing than age and gender, the criteria used by aid organizations to define target beneficiaries.

As early as 1998, MSF denounced the fact that any assistance channeled through the PDS was discriminatory by nature. By using the PDS as the distribution channel for assistance, organizations are collaborating in organized government discrimination of its own citizens based on politics instead of needs.

"Last time I received food from the PDS was in 1997, only once that year. I received according to my ration ticket. Everyone has different amounts," testified a 20 year-old man from Hoeryong city last October.

According to individuals we interviewed, ordinary urban residents cannot rely on the PDS for their survival and are forced to find alternative ways to obtain food. Erratic for years, the PDS came to a virtual standstill in the late 90's with meager distribution on major national holidays.

THE QUALITY OF MONITORING FOOD AID

After 7 years of massive international assistance to North Korea, monitoring conditions remain unacceptable. North Korea still does not provide the complete list of beneficiary institutions and WFP teams are still barred from making spot checks.¹ Random access for assessment purposes appears to be impossible, calling into question the transparency of field inspections. Some refugees have witnessed UN visits and their testimonies raise questions over the way field inspections are organized, if not staged, by the North Korean partners.

From its experience and understanding of the North Korean system, MSF would like to reiterate that access by the population to the aid it needs can only be improved if there are independent needs assessments, independent distribution mechanisms, and independent monitoring by operating agencies.

THE LACK OF PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FOR NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

Once outside North Korea, challenges remain for North Koreans seeking refuge outside their country. Most North Korean refugees do not even contemplate reaching South Korea. Instead, they cross the border into China in search of food for their families, or a temporary job that will allow them to buy medicines or other essential goods needed at home. These refugees live in a precarious situation in China and are in urgent need of assistance. Considered illegal migrants by the Chinese authorities, they live in hiding and face the risk of being arrested at any time, forcefully repatriated, and subject to severe repercussions in North Korea. Border rules posted along the Tumen River in Chinese and Korean stipulate that, *"It is forbidden to financially help, allow to stay, harbor, or aid in the settlement of people from the neighboring country who have crossed the border illegally."*

Fines and rewards² discouraging Chinese citizens from assisting North Korean refugees and recent arrests of foreign NGO workers illustrate how impossible it is to adequately provide effective humanitarian assistance.³ Only a handful of refugees manage to reach a third country, where they continue to face the risk of being arrested anytime as illegal migrants during their 3-to-4-month screening process. Up to now, none of the 1988 North Korean defectors who have been resettled in South Korea have been granted refugee status.

Numerous discussions between MSF and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) about the need for protection have not proved fruitful. July 2001 calls by MSF on the Chinese authorities to cease forced repatriations and allow humanitarian assistance for the refugees have not been answered. The ongoing repression of North Korean refugees and of those who assist them limits the scope of any humanitarian operation on the Sino-Korean border. There may soon be no more refugees to tell you about North Korea.

CONCLUSION

The need for assistance to the North Korean people is widely acknowledged. Testimonies of North Korean refugees confirm that despite massive international relief going into the country, a significant segment of the population remains in a precar-

¹ Statement of John Powell, Director of the WFP Regional Bureau for Asia. Joongang Ilbo, April 12, 2002

² Fines:

5000 to 10000 Rmb for helping NK refugees.

Rewards :

30 RMB for denouncing shelter

50 Rmb for denouncing a refugee

100 Rmb for taking a refugee to the Chinese police station

³ *Information collected by an aid worker at the border in July 2001. (8Rmb = \$1 USD)*

³ 1) On April 20, 2001, the Chinese government arrested, detained and harshly treated four members of the NGO Good Friends and their translator 2) Chun Ki-won, 46, a South Korean missionary helping North Korean defectors in China has been under custody by Chinese security authorities since he was caught at the end of 2001 3) Rev. Choi Bong Il, 46, was arrested on April 15, 2002 by Yanji Police for his relations with a group of defectors.

ious food situation. These testimonies also suggest that humanitarian assistance is not primarily directed at, nor reaching, the most vulnerable populations.

Médecins Sans Frontières expresses its grave concern over the endless suffering of the North Korean people and urges aid agencies operating inside North Korea to improve their monitoring and be responsible for the populations they are entrusted to assist. A second concern addresses the dire plight of North Koreans seeking refuge in China. Médecins Sans Frontières urges UNHCR and the Chinese government to open a dialogue leading to ensuring protection of North Korean refugees in China, and the provision of emergency assistance to the refugee population.

Thank you for your attention

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL TESTIMONIES OF NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

1. Statements regarding reasons for crossing the border

Man, 35, from Hoeryong city, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in October 2001:

"There are rich people in North Korea too. People who are poor, who just eat corn, come here [to China]. The rich, who have the rice, they don't need to come here. For them, we are bad, traitors."

Boy, 18, from Sampong city, Musan county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in July 2001:

"I came to China in June 2001 because I had nothing to eat, my mother died and my father is sick."

Peasant, 40, from Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"Me and my wife came to China because we were starving."

Women, 43, from Aoji coal mine, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"We have the choice between dying from starvation or dying in the hands of the police after being arrested. Anyhow we may die so we come to China, at least we can please our stomach there."

"If somebody has a high position in North Korea, he does not have any problem. If I was in a high position, I would not need to come to China."

2. Statements regarding pregnant women's access to aid

Pregnant women, 31, from Hyesan county, Ryanggang Province. Interview conducted in February 2002:

"I am pregnant and I will deliver next month. As a pregnant woman I am not entitled to any aid from the government. No pregnant women ever receive any. Until the end of the 80s, pregnant women would receive food during their hospitalization."

Women suffering from tuberculosis, 33, from Chongjin city, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2002:

"Pregnant women do not benefit from government care. Well so they say but . . . when the third child is born, a 300 g ration of food is distributed in his name. After that there is nothing for the child nor for the mother."

3. Statements regarding elderly access to aid

Man, retired from the Workers Party, 50, from Aoji coal mine, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"After I retired, me and my wife have not got any income. We don't ask too much, not even rice. But even corn soup we cannot always have."

Retired couple from the Workers Party, 60 & 61, from Obong city, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"When you're over 61 years old you're unable to work because of the age limit. But right now in North Korea, they write the [retirement] annuity on a piece of paper. With that you can get 600 g of rice for one day but it is only a piece of paper, and I never receive anything, and I cannot eat the paper, we are not goats. I never get any distribution nor any grant and I never receive a wage. If people in the coal mines don't receive any food, how can old people like us receive any?"

4. Statements regarding food availability for farmers

Couple of farmers, 49 and 45, from Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in October 2001:

"We came to China because we were in difficulties so we came here to get some help. We had a bad harvest, no PDS, it's hard to get food, so we came here along."

Peasant, 40, from Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"Before we used to receive some distribution of crops, but nowadays there are not enough crops. Although we plant crops for the year it is not even enough for peasants. On the top of that we have to provide crops to the workers office. There are only 3 to 4 months a year when we have enough crops to eat. Most of the crops are provided to the army base."

Farmer, 40, from Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"Once they tax everything there is not much left for us to eat."

Retired couple from the Worker's Party, 60 & 61, from Obong city, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"Right now farmers cannot even produce enough food for themselves. There are several reasons why; there isn't any fertilizer and farmers don't have energy to work because they don't have anything to eat."

Pregnant women, 31, from Hyesan county, Ryanggang Province. Interview conducted in February 2002:

"People living in the cities are always better off than those from the countryside. In the city, they can always manage to beg. In the countryside, there is nothing but the grass for the rabbits."

5. Statements regarding the functioning of the PDS

Couple of farmers, 49 and 45, from Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in October 2001:

"The PDS stopped in 95-96 but we still have to keep working"

Man, 23, from Musan county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in July 2001:

"In North Korea the only source of food is PDS, if there is no food ration, there is no other source of food. But you know, since I began to have hair on my head, I have never seen food ration on a regular basis, so it was erratic already after my birth and PDS has always been a major problem for the people."

Woman, 50, from Sampong district, Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"The government does not supply any food to the population nowadays, and says to them that 'although we only have water and fresh air, we have to keep our ideology.' They just leave on corn soup in my hometown. They get the corn from merchants from Chongjin who make profit out of it."

Woman, 50, from Sampong district, Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"In 1997, on April 15, Kim Il Sung's birthday, I received 3 kg of corn from the US. Every family also got 10 kg of potatoes from China on October 10th, 1998 for the Worker's Party foundation day. Besides those two cases, we did not get anymore from the PDS. And the government announced to citizens that no more food would be provided so they should not expect anything from the government and that everybody had to manage their life by themselves."

Woman, 30, from Aoji, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"Since 1995 I have only received food from PDS once or twice a year for Kim Il Sung's and Kim Jung Il's birthdays."

Retired couple from the Worker's Party, 60 & 61, from Obong city, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"We just receive food from PDS for anniversaries in January 1, February 16, April 15, a ration for 3 days."

Man, 35, from Aoji, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"I gave up my job in the 7.7 fertilizer factory because there wasn't any food distribution."

Pregnant woman, 31, from Hyesan, Ryanggang Province. Interview conducted in February 2002:

"In theory the PDS should distribute 800g/day/person. But since the 80's, the rations have officially been reduced to 4-5 months. Even though it is fixed like that, the PDS is corrupted and this quantity has not been provided. We receive much less than that. The decrease in rations is always justified by the need to help the army or because the agricultural program did not succeed."

6. Statements regarding visits of UN inspectors

Man, 23, from Musan county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in July 2001:

"I have seen some foreign guys from the UN traveling around. I don't know what they are doing but when they are traveling, just around this time, government suddenly becomes very busy, you know, try to find those undernourished boys and children . . . They keep them away, you know, those undernourished children, at some place . . . Perhaps they were expecting that these UN guys visit welfare facilities inspection, so they want to be prepared for it."

Man, 19, from Hamheung city, South Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"Last year I saw UN guys coming to Musan to assess flood damage. The government dug up the river and the streets to make it look more damaged, in order to get more rice. The UN investigators came back to Musan a number of times."

7. Statements regarding forced repatriation and related punishment in North Korea

Boy, 16, from North Pyongan Province. Interview conducted in July 2001:

"I was arrested a few month ago in China, put in jail, then sent to North Korea where I was kept in a childrens camp in Heoryong. I escaped again to come back to China."

Man, 23, from Musan county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in July 2001:

"I was detained in a Chinese detention center in Hunchun in January 2000 then sent back to North Korea with another group of North Koreans. We were handcuffed until we reached Saepiol and then we were blindfolded and taken to a camp. I learned from my cellmates later on that we were in Chongjin. In the camp it was very hard and I have been tortured, but after I mentioned my aunt was working in the North Korean anti South Korean intelligence, I was released."

Woman, 50, from Sampong district, Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001: *"My son was already arrested and repatriated 3 times from China, therefore he will stay in jail for 5 years. Citizens know that if they are caught leaving the country, the first time they have to stay in jail one year, the second time 3 years. I myself was arrested for leaving the country without permission last year in July. I was taken to Chongjin city jail where I only stayed one month because it was too crowded and there was not enough space in the jail. There were 120 males and 178 females there, all of them had been arrested for escaping the country."*

8. Statements regarding the manipulation of foreign aid

Man, 23, from Musan county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in July 2001:

"The rice and corn in the market are in foreign packages, it is the food that arrives in Korea from good people like you. Then those bastards of senior party members are taking them into their home and their big bellies, but since they cannot sell the things themselves at the market, then they send their wife to do the job. I can precisely tell you that the things are from foreign countries because I often go to the port in Chongjin. A lot of cereals are being unloaded there. We saw all kinds of grains and foreign ships. And sometimes we see the American flag and the package label. So I can precisely say where the cereals we find in the market come from."

Woman, 50, from Sampong district, Onsong county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"Citizens know that a lot of relief supply is coming to North Korea from other countries. We have heard about it. But most of the time we never got any of those supplies, so we think that the government keeps for themselves."

Man, 20, from Chongjin city, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in April 2001:

"I have been to the black market recently, I have seen bags of corn there. It had a US flag on the top and it was written that it was a gift from the US."

Mine worker, 46, from Saepiol county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"We heard that soldiers in the army still eat 3 meals a day, 2 meals of rice and one meal of porridge. To the army, the food goes to the army. The rice is used to make oil and turned into gunpowder. From what I heard, the army base has about 80–90% go to the army and the rest is sent to the people. At the army factory they use glutinous rice powder to make gunpowder. Or the glutinous rice or corn or peas can be used to produce oil. Or candy powder can be used as well."

Man, 36, from Rason, Eundok county, North Hamkyong Province. Interview conducted in February 2001:

"If you listen to the [South Korean] radio it says how much rice is brought into the country from South Korea, Japan and America. 500,000 tons came into Nampo harbor and other places. But in reality the amount of our ration is one or two days worth, sometimes a week worth. After that there is no more. So I start to wonder if we really got that rice and if the South Korean radio is lying. I think about that sometimes: if the rice came in, why is no one giving it to the people?"

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much, Ms. Delaunay. Mr. Powell?

STATEMENT OF JOHN POWELL, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

Mr. POWELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank this congressional panel for invitation to speak with you about the food situation in North Korea. The timing of the hearing is opportune because I've recently returned from a 13-day mission to that country.

The purpose of that mission was to take stock of our emergency operation in North Korea. During the mission, I visited WFP sub-offices in Sinuiju, Hamhung, Chongjin, Hyesan and Wonsan as well as Pyongyang. I saw WFP activities in each of these areas, visiting orphanages, nurseries, kindergartens, primary schools, pediatric hospitals and food for work activities. I spoke with pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly. I also met with government officials at national, provincial and county levels.

Let me, if I may, Mr. Chairman, share with you a few snapshots of what we saw. Power—the lack of power is evident everywhere, especially in the industrial sector where factories lie idle, causing considerable unemployment and underemployment, particularly in the northeast of the country. Lack of power and other inputs means less fertilizer, less fertilizer means less food production.

Hillside and urban agriculture—we saw farmers preparing land for planting on slopes where it was quite impossible to stand erect. This land should be under forest cover, not under cultivation. In urban areas we saw land cultivated from the roadside to the very edge of apartment buildings. In rural areas, the few meters of land around the house are intensely cultivated, including on the roofs.

Children's nutrition—there was a visible improvement in the health status of children. We no longer saw evidence of the widespread, acute malnutrition seen in previous years. Children in kindergartens and primary schools were active and alert. A far cry from the reports of just a few years ago when children were visibly lethargic and with the usual signs associated with the existence of famine—orange hair, skin discoloration and so on.

Primary schools—we spoke with a 70-year old principal of a primary school who said that school attendance had increased from 75

to 95 percent since the introduction of WFP biscuits. Primary school children, some 1.4 million of them make up the largest number people who receive WFP assistance.

So while great strides have been made in reducing levels of acute malnutrition, the kind most associated with famine, chronic malnutrition remains at unacceptably high levels. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of children under 5 are malnourished because even with full WFP rations the children may not be getting enough food.

On the issue of the alleged diversion of WFP food assistance to the military, let me be direct. The army takes what it wants from the national harvest up front, in full. It takes it in the form of food Koreans prefer—Korean rice. The food that WFP provides is overwhelmingly maize or wheat, or in 2001, Japanese brown rice—commodities not preferred by those in power. They do not need to take WFP food, nor have we seen any evidence that they do.

As to monitoring, WFP has its' main office in Pyongyang and five sub-offices located throughout the country. We have some 50 international staff who together make between 300 to 400 monitoring visits every month of the year. They visit all types of institutions through which WFP food is distributed. Often it is nurseries, kindergartens, pediatric hospitals, schools—primary and secondary. They do all the things that I did, and they always speak with those who are receiving the food.

As a result, we have amassed a considerable amount of observable data during our 7 years in the country. And when we have concerns about food distribution, we do something about it. In 2000, for example, we cut out the general hospital feeding program because we were not sufficiently confident that the food was reaching those for whom it was intended. And, in 2001, we did not proceed with a 92,000 ton relief and recovery operation because we could not reach agreement with the authorities on the number of additional staff that WFP would need to properly monitor the operation.

So like in WFP operation anywhere in the world, we do not know where each and every bag of food is going, but we do have a reasonable degree of assurance that the food provided through WFP gets to those who need it.

Yes, we still have a long way to go to lift our monitoring standards in North Korea to the same level as they are in most other countries. Let me explain the main reasons why we are not satisfied. We are not satisfied because we do not yet have access to all of the counties to assess needs and to provide food to those who need it. Our “no access no food” policy means, we think, that many people in genuine need of food assistance are not reached.

We are not satisfied because we are unable to make random spot checks. We are not satisfied because we are not permitted to bring Korean speakers into North Korea as WFP staff members. And we want to have access to farmers markets to have a better understanding of the relative price of food commodities bought, sold or barter. These are matters that we are taking up consistently and persistently with the authorities.

This being said, we have come a long way with the DPRK authorities over the past 4 years as some degree of trust and con-

fidence has been built. Some of these milestones include the establishment of five WFP sub-offices throughout the country and 50 international staff, many of whom are located in those sub-offices.

WFP is the only agency to have access to so many counties—some 163 of 206. And to have staff permanently assigned outside of Pyongyang. The number of counties to which we have access has increased from 145 in 1998 to 163 in 2002. This means that we can now reach more people who need help, about 85 percent of the population.

Since 2000, WFP international staff have been able to take Korean language training lessons in Pyongyang. A few have a pretty fair grasp of the language and can at least detect when interpretation is not accurate.

The government has agreed to a new nutrition survey to follow up the 1998 nutrition survey. This has been a longstanding issue on our agency and the government's agreement is a big step forward. A technical proposal for the conduct of the survey is now with the authorities. The government has reaffirmed its commitment given last year to provide WFP with the full list of institutions through which WFP food assistance is provided.

This arrangement will enable us to increase the randomness of our monitoring. It is, of course, not the same thing as random access, but it is progress. The authorities have informed us that this list is to be made available shortly.

The 1998 nutrition survey found that 62 percent of children under the age of 7 years were suffering from chronic malnutrition. The kind that arises from eating insufficient nutritious food day in, day out over a protracted period. That same survey showed that about 16 percent of children were acutely malnourished. The kind that is usually associated with the existence of famine.

WFP does not have the luxury of saying that it will leave because our minimum operational conditions are not met. We need to remain engaged and persevere and to work toward achieving those conditions. They will not be met if we all simply pull out. And the resultant suffering for the country's most vulnerable would verge toward the unimaginable.

We remain optimistic that with persistent principled negotiation, and the support of the international community, much more progress can be made. And no gain achieved has been later taken back.

As to resources, WFP will run out of food in July or August this year unless new pledges are made urgently. The urgency arises because it takes 2 to 4 months to translate a pledge from a donor to food into the stomach of child in North Korea. Beginning this month, we're having to eliminate the distribution of food to some 675,000 secondary school children. Some 350,000 of the elderly will not receive food rations through WFP. Care givers in institutions, 144,000 of them, mainly women, will not receive WFP rations. And food-for-work will be sharply cut back, therefore, reaching far fewer urban underemployed in the northeast; perhaps, affecting a half a million people. Some 1.5 million people will not get the food because of the shortfall.

Doing this will stretch the reach of our support to pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children for a few more

months. It will not be enough to meet their requirements for the year. And those recipients of WFP food assistance will therefore have to rely on a public distribution system that cannot cope.

That system will provide her with perhaps 200 to 250 grams of cereal a day or about half the ration of a refugee in a camp in any country in the world. Without that food, the prospects are chilling. Those who rely on WFP assistance are looking down the barrel of the food crisis.

Before closing, on behalf of WFP I would like to thank the people of the United States for their unstinting generosity for the most vulnerable people in North Korea—their women and children. The United States has already contributed some 155,000 metric tons of food to our emergency operation for 2002. Without this food, the situation would be much more serious; and it would have become so much earlier. It has been a major contributor to our emergency operations over all the years of our work in North Korea.

The United States has also been a strong and clear voice in support of the kinds of measures that we would like to see to further improve the operational performance of our work; and in improving the working conditions of our staff. And perhaps, most importantly, the United States has consistently shown the commitment to separate its political agenda from humanitarian concerns, holding true to the principle spelled out by former President Reagan, “A hungry child knows no politics.” This is not always an easy principle to follow; and we admire you for being able to do so. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Powell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN POWELL, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

CONGRESSIONAL PANEL PRESENTATION

On behalf of the World Food Programme I would like to thank this Congressional Panel for the invitation to speak with you about the food situation in DPR (North) Korea. The timing of the hearing is opportune because I have recently returned from a 13 day Mission to North Korea. The purpose of the Mission was to take stock of our emergency operation in the country. During that Mission I visited WFP Sub-Offices in Sinuiju, Hamhung, Chongjin, Hyesan and Wonsan; as well as Pyongyang. I saw WFP activities in each of these areas, visiting orphanages, nurseries, kindergartens, primary schools, pediatric hospitals and food for work activities. I spoke with pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly. I also met with Government Officials at National, Provincial and County level.

Let me share with you a few snapshots of what we saw:

- Power—the lack of power is evident everywhere, especially in the industrial sector where factories sit idle, causing considerable unemployment and underemployment, particularly in the Northeast of the country. Lack of power and other inputs also means less fertilizer, which means less food production. Lack of power means very little light, especially in the winter; and the hand-carrying of water, whether in rural settings or in apartment buildings in the urban areas. It is a huge problem for hospitals; and not much less for the citizens of the country. It also causes problems for our local food production where limited and erratic power supply means that often the factory equipment cannot function.
- Hillside and urban agriculture—we saw farmers preparing land for planting on slopes where it was quite impossible to stand erect. This is land that should be under forest cover, not under cultivation. Yet a clear sign that any land on which food could be produced—however tenuously—would be used, despite the negative impact on the environment that this practice causes—including increased vulnerability to flooding. In urban areas we saw land cultivated from the roadside to the very edge of the apartment buildings. In

rural areas, the few metres of land around the houses are intensely cultivated—including on the roofs.

- Children's nutrition—there was a visible improvement in the health status of the children. We no longer saw evidence of the widespread acute malnutrition seen in the previous years. Children in kindergartens and primary schools were active and alert. A far cry from the reports of just a few years ago, when children were visibly lethargic and with the usual signs associated with the onset of famine—orange hair and skin discolorations.
- Primary schools—we spoke with a 70 year old Principal of a primary school who said that student attendance had increased from 75% to 95% since the introduction of WFP biscuits. And the schoolteachers, who also received the biscuits, were more regular in their attendance and more active with the children. Primary school children—some 1.4 million of them—make up the largest number of people who receive WFP food assistance.

So, while great strides have been made in reducing the levels of acute malnutrition, the kind most associated with famine, chronic malnutrition remains at unacceptably high levels. It is estimated that more than 40% of children under 5 remain malnourished because even with the full WFP rations the children may not be getting enough food.

On the issue of the alleged diversion of WFP food assistance to the military, let me be direct. The army takes what it wants from the national harvest up front, in full. And it takes it in the form of food Koreans prefer: Korean rice. The food that WFP provides is overwhelmingly maize or wheat (or, in 2001, Japanese “brown rice”), commodities not preferred by those in power. They do not need to take WFP food. Nor have we any evidence that they do.

As to monitoring, WFP has its' main Office in Pyongyang and five Sub-Offices located throughout the country. We have some 50 international staff who together make between 300–400 monitoring visits every month of the year. They visit all of the types of institutions through which WFP food is distributed—orphans, nurseries, kindergartens, pediatric hospitals and schools, both primary and secondary. They visit pregnant women and nursing mothers at home, as they do the elderly. They visit Food-for-Work sites. And always they speak with those who are receiving the food.

As a result we have amassed a considerable amount of observational data during our seven years in the country. And when we have concerns about the food distribution we do something about it. In 2000, for example, we cut out the general hospital feeding programme because we were not sufficiently confident that the food was reaching those for whom it was intended. And, in 2001, we did not proceed with a 92,000 tonnes Relief and Recovery Operation because we could not reach agreement with the Authorities on the number of additional staff that WFP would need to properly monitor that Operation. So, like in any WFP operation anywhere in the world, we do not know where each and every bag of food is going but we do have a reasonable degree of assurance that the food provided through WFP gets to those who need it.

Yet we still have a long way to go to lift our monitoring standards in North Korea to the same level as they are in most other countries. Let me explain the main reasons why we are not satisfied. We are not satisfied because we do not yet have access to all of the counties to assess needs and to provide food to those who need it. Our “no access no food” policy means, we think, that many people in genuine need of food assistance are not reached. We are not satisfied because we are not able to make random spot checks. This diminishes the effectiveness of any set of monitoring arrangements. We are not satisfied because we are not permitted to bring Korean speakers into North Korea as WFP staff members, which means that we do not have the opportunity to interact directly with those who receive WFP food assistance. And we want to have access to farmers markets to have a better understanding of the relative price of the food commodities bought, sold or bartered. These are matters that are taken up consistently—and persistently—with the Authorities.

Other matters of special concern to us relate to the working conditions of WFP staff in the country, especially in the Sub-Offices. We do not yet have a medical evacuation procedure agreed with the Authorities, placing staff members—and their supervisors—in a very uncomfortable position. After the completion of the daily monitoring visits, our staff working in the Sub-Offices used to not have much freedom of movement outside of the grounds of the hotels in which they were accommodated without prior permission; and even then they were to be accompanied. This restriction has been somewhat relaxed over the last few months. Most recently in Hyesan, for example, our staff can walk now to a monument and back unaccompanied.

panied. Our staff are not allowed to have satellite phones or vehicle-to-vehicle communications or secure international communications arrangements. We are not allowed to have nationals of Japan or the Republic of (South) Korea on staff; and we have only one United States national in the country. (He is the Country Director.) Again, these are matters that we constantly raise with the Authorities.

This being said, we have come a very long way with the DPRK Authorities over the past four years, as trust and confidence has been built. Some of these milestones include:

- The establishment of five WFP Sub-Offices throughout the country; and 50 international staff, many of who are located in the Sub-Offices. A remarkable advance on the three staff members, all of who were located in Pyongyang, which was the situation in 1995.
- WFP is the only agency to have access to so many counties, some 163 of 206; and have staff permanently assigned outside of Pyongyang. The number of counties to which we have access has increased from 145 in 1998 to 163 in 2002. This means that we can now reach more people who need help—about 85% of the population.
- Since 2000, WFP international staff have been able to take Korean language training lessons in Pyongyang. A few have a pretty fair grasp of the language and can at least detect when interpretation is not accurate.
- The Government has agreed to a new Nutrition Survey to follow up the 1998 Nutrition Survey. This has been a longstanding issue on our agenda; and the Government's agreement is a big step forward. A technical proposal for the conduct of the Survey is now with the authorities. The Survey is scheduled for the third quarter of this year, with the results being available before the end of the year. The Survey will be a joint UNICEF/WFP/DPRK undertaking, with technical support being provided through an international academic consortium. The results of the Survey will enable us to compare the situation in 2002 with that of 1998; to measure the progress of the nutritional status of children; and to improve the planning and targeting of interventions for their benefit.
- The Government has re-affirmed its commitment to give WFP a full list of the institutions through which WFP food assistance is provided. This arrangement will enable WFP to increase the randomness of its monitoring. It is, of course, not the same as random access. But it is progress. The Authorities informed us that this list is to be made available "shortly."

The 1998 Nutrition Survey found that about 62% of children under seven years of age were suffering chronic malnutrition; the kind that arises from eating insufficient nutritious food day in and day out over a protracted period. That same Survey showed that about 16% of children were acutely malnourished, the kind that is generally associated with the existence of famine. WFP does not have the luxury of saying that it will leave because our minimum operational conditions are not met. We need to remain engaged and persevere, and work towards achieving those conditions. They will not be met if we all simply pull out. And the resultant suffering for the country's most vulnerable would verge towards the unimaginable.

We remain optimistic that with persistent principled negotiation—and the support of the international community—much more progress can be made.

As to resources, WFP will run out of food in July or August this year unless new pledges are made urgently. The urgency arises because it takes from 2–4 months to translate a pledge from a donor to food into the stomach of a child in North Korea. Beginning this month we are having to eliminate the distribution of food to some 675,000 secondary school children; and some 350,000 of the elderly will not receive any food rations through WFP. Caregivers in institutions—some 144,000 of them, mainly women—will not receive WFP rations. And food-for Work must be sharply cut back, thereby reaching far fewer urban underemployed in the Northeast, affecting perhaps 500,000 people. Some 1.5 million people will not get food because of the shortfall.

DPRK is a mountainous country with limited arable land and a short growing season. It cannot produce enough food to meet the basic requirements of its people. And it does not have the foreign exchange to import that food. For 2002, a "normal bad year", the gap between the quantity of food that is available (food production plus imports) and the needs of the North Korean people is about 1.5 million metric tons of cereals.

WFP does not seek to fill the national gap. We calculate the food needs of the most vulnerable groups—pregnant women, nursing mothers, children and a small percentage of the elderly and those most dependent on the Public Distribution Sys-

tem. Women and children comprise about 90% of those who receive WFP food. For some categories of beneficiary the food is provided year-round, for example pregnant women, nursing mothers and children in primary schools. For other categories of beneficiary such as secondary school children, the food is targeted geographically to those living in the urban areas of the most food insecure Provinces, mainly in the Northeast. For other categories, such as Food-for Work beneficiaries, the food assistance is provided only during certain times of the year, typically over the period April through August when these people must depend on a Public Distribution System that cannot cope.

WFP needs 611,000 metric tons of food for calendar year 2002 to meet the needs of the 6.4 million beneficiaries, most of who are women and children who live in the counties to which we have access. We have available about half of that amount. The United States, the Republic of Korea and Finland have given to this year's operation; and we are hopeful that other donors will step forward.

As I indicated earlier, we are having to cut back on our planned distributions. Doing this will stretch the reach of our support to pregnant women, nursing mothers and children aged from six months to 10 years for a few more months. It will not be enough to meet their requirements for the year. An erstwhile recipient of WFP food assistance will therefore have to rely on a Public Distribution System that will provide her with perhaps 200–250 grammes of cereal per day. Or about half of the ration of a refugee in a camp. There is no doubt that the people are hungry and need the food. Without that food, the prospects are chilling. Those who rely on WFP assistance are looking down the barrel of a food crisis.

Before closing, on behalf of WFP I would like to thank the people of the United States for their unstinting generosity to the most vulnerable people in North Korea—their women and children. The United States has already contributed some 155,000 metric tones of food to the Emergency Operation for 2002. Without this food, the situation would be much more serious; and it would have become so much earlier. And it has been the major contributor to our Emergency Operations over the years of our work in that country. The United States has also been a strong and clear voice in support of the kind of measures that would further improve the operational performance of our work; and in improving the working conditions of our staff. And, perhaps most importantly, the United States has consistently shown the commitment to separate its political agenda from humanitarian concern, holding true to the principle spelled out by former president Reagan “A hungry child knows no politics”. This is not always an easy principle to follow; and we admire you being able to do so.

We thank you.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you, Mr. Powell. Mr. Peters?

**STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY A. PETERS, FOUNDER AND
DIRECTOR, HELPING HANDS/KOREA AND TON-A-MONTH CLUB**

Mr. PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this privilege and honor to appear before the Subcommittee today. I am a spokesman and founder for two small, what I call grassroots initiatives. One, Helping Hands Korea, which is principally to aid North Korean refugees and was founded approximately 4 years ago. And, in fact, this was an outgrowth of our first initiative, which was Ton-a-Month Club, a tiny, as the name implies, a small initiative started in 1996 as more news reports surfaced about the famine in North Korea.

I hope that in some ways that my testimony might represent the efforts of small, individual citizens who are concerned and do not have large resources, but nevertheless feel that action is imperative, even on an individual basis. I'm happy to say that despite the IMF crisis in Korea that began in December 1997, a recent checking of our records revealed that, quite amazingly, despite the fact that we are not a registered charity in South Korea, we were 10 years ahead of schedule of our Ton-a-Month Club—one ton per month donation. So it's a testimony, I believe, to the fact that it is possible for individuals to make a difference.

Naturally, using our own resources and small fundraisers, we wanted to be sure that our efforts and our donations were going where they were intended that the “widows’ mites” that we were collecting, in fact, were going where they were intended. Fact-finding missions to Northeast China showed us after perhaps 2 or 3 years, that there were troubling developments about transparency.

At the same time we came to learn of the refugee crisis during these factfinding missions. That was when Helping Hands Korea was born and we began to shift, although limited, a larger percentage of our collected donations to helping refugees.

In my opinion, and in my experience, this has a very distinct advantage in that you are continuing to help the North Koreans. However, you have eliminated the middle man. You have eliminated handing over the donation to the bureaucracy that is controlling the North Koreans within their own borders. Instead, you are entrusting your donations to tried and proven, very sacrificial aid workers in third countries—China, but other countries as well.

As to the effects of the long-term famine, as Mr. Becker referred to, I wonder if, for a moment, we could put a face on this. If I could ask that one picture of a young boy be put on the monitor. The name of this boy is Yoo Chul Min. In fact, I first came in contact with this 10-year old boy last April in a combined aid trip to Northeast China. As well, I invited Dr. Vollertsen to join us, since he had been sent out of North Korea itself; I encouraged Dr. Vollertsen to come and help the refugees in Northeast China.

He very kindly came. As well we also brought some international journalists with us to see the refugee situation. During that visit, I had the pleasure of meeting this small North Korean boy who was taking refuge in a missionary’s home. He, as you can see, this was actually the picture to be given to the South Korean Embassy in Ulan Bator when Mr. Yoo Chul Min would have crossed the border from China into Mongolia and then taken—escorted by activists to the capital of Mongolia for processing for a final—being brought to South Korea.

I’m using Chul Min because, despite the fact that 1 or 2 years of relatively good diet in China and his appearance to be a relatively healthy, pre-teen boy, the events that I will describe shows how mistaken these appearances are and the ravages of the long-term famine.

Chul Min was one of five members of a team that were gathered to make an attempt to cross under the nine high voltage fences that exist at the China-Mongolian frontier. Unfortunately, the leader who had been briefed—the leader of their small team who had been briefed the night before, several hours prior to the departure time, the leader was picked up by Chinese security officials and the remaining small team was leaderless.

Given the crackdown as of roughly February of last year in Northeast China against the North Korean refugees, the team made a very sobering decision that they would go forward feeling that they could not go back to the area of Yenji and other Chinese towns near the Chinese-North Korean border with which they had some familiarity.

They went forward and perhaps, predictably, became lost. They were 26 hours without food and water. This does not seem life-threatening, even to a normal and healthy pre-teen boy. I'm very sad to say that this cannot be said for Chul Min. He perished in the frontier within those 26 hours, which I believe reveals simply that his young body, which had been ravaged by the long-term effects of malnutrition in his home town or his own particular situation in North Korea had weakened him to this point.

Because my time is quickly running out, I am going to ask that another picture be shown, if it is all right. This is my dear friend Chun Ki Won, and perhaps, one of the bravest men I have ever had the privilege of knowing. He is a Robin Hood in every sense of the word of helping the poor and helpless. In fact, this gentleman is now languishing in an Inner-Mongolian prison because he has helped in the underground railroad of assisting North Korean refugees to Mongolia and other areas.

He was caught on December 30th of 2001 attempting to take over a number of refugees after many successful attempts before. Unfortunately, this time it's very possible that among the handful of refugees was a possible informer who had informed the Chinese security in advance that they were coming and he was picked up. He remains in prison in Inner-Mongolia. He has been there for a few days beyond 4 months. He has been visited only once by a consular officer of his nationality in South Korea as far as we know, as of a week ago.

And I can only act as a spokesman, a voice for, not only Mr. Chun, but many others whom I consider unsung heroes who have taken it upon themselves, not only their personal safety, but their personal resources. Some of whom have gone into debt for considerable amounts, which have strained their marriages and their own personal finances to bring North Koreans to safety.

I would like to suggest, therefore, that due consideration be given to allocating funds to help those who are literally risking their lives to help North Korean refugees in third countries. I would also like to suggest on the humanitarian aid side the possibility of a shotgun effect.

Instead of giving enormous amounts at one given time, and in state-to-state transfers, I would like to strongly suggest that smaller allocations of grants, et cetera, could be given so that the likelihood that more of the aid could get across the border in accepted channels. In channels that—I'm sorry, not DPRK accepted channels, but channels that have been already established as tried and proven through a strong relationship that has been formed with the ethnic Chinese-Korean community on the border and taken across.

I feel that due consideration should be given to portioning out smaller amounts of large grants, and giving that to aid organizations that, perhaps, could have an improved level of effectiveness. I thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Peters follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY A. PETERS, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, HELPING HANDS/KOREA AND TON-A-MONTH CLUB

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your invitation to testify and this opportunity to address the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on East

Asia and the Pacific, on humanitarian and human rights concerns related to North Koreans. In this written statement I will briefly address the humanitarian aid aspect of our work, then give special emphasis to our efforts to ease the plight of North Korean refugees in China.

BACKGROUND OF OUR RELIEF EFFORTS

Helping Hands Korea is a Christian charitable initiative based in Seoul that was founded in 1990. In October of 1996, our organization significantly shifted its primary focus from activities within South Korea to the desperate needs of North Koreans. Our first project to help needy North Koreans was a grassroots initiative we named Ton-a-Month Club. Its genesis was a small prayer meeting around our kitchen table in the summer of 1996 and took as its goal providing humanitarian food aid to the most vulnerable victims of famine in the North. With a staff limited to my own family and a handful of volunteers with limited resources, our project has not gained official charitable status with the Republic of Korea government, so our fundraising has relied principally on rallying sacrificial donations from concerned South Koreans, expatriate residents in South Korea and several longstanding and faithful supporters in the U.S. to purchase one ton per month (or its equivalent value) of desperately needed foodstuffs to send as famine-relief to the North Korean civilian population. In the six years since its inception, Ton-a-Month Club has dispatched food aid to North Koreans through a number of channels: Korean National Red Cross, The Internet Campaign to Help North Korean Flood Victims, Good Friends, as well as a wide range of independent deliveries that have been arranged with the assistance of aid workers on the border of China and North Korea to bring rice, corn, wheat flour, and a mixture of goat and soy milk to individual villages and towns in the neediest areas of Hamkyoungpuk-to Province of North Korea.

Like many other humanitarian aid initiatives large and small, we at Helping Hands Korea continue to have serious concerns regarding North Korean government interference in the delivery of food aid to the most vulnerable sectors of its population: children under age six, orphaned children, pregnant mothers, the handicapped and the elderly. It is our understanding that North Korean society is divided into 52 strata, and the basis for these divisions is essentially the degree of loyalty to the Kim Jong-il regime. Humanitarian aid given in government-to-government transfers to North Korea becomes a reward to the loyal and its deprivation constitutes a punishment for the disloyal.

It is apparent to us that the priorities of the North Korean government in awarding food aid to its citizens is fundamentally at cross purposes with our own desire to see the neediest taken care of. For that reason, we have periodically conducted in the past four years combined fact-finding trips to Northeastern China (as well as an actual monitoring trip to the Rajin-Songbong area of North Korea itself) to regularly seek out more effective and transparent methods to ensure that our donors' wishes to feed the most vulnerable were being honored.

REFUGEE ASSISTANCE: AN OUTGROWTH OF FAMINE RELIEF

In the course of the abovementioned fact-finding trips to northeastern China in a quest to continually improve our Ton-a-Month effectiveness, we grew increasingly aware and deeply concerned by the discovery of a considerable number of North Koreans who had fled their nation due to hunger, privation, and fear of political and religious persecution. In China we began to visit secret orphanages for North Korean children and temporary urban shelters for adults. On two occasions we have also invited a physician to join us for the purpose of bringing medical attention to North Koreans in a mountain hideaway as well as urban shelters in northeastern China.

The more we personally investigated and interviewed individuals in this large-scale exodus, the more shocked we became at a growing body of reliable reports that the number of North Korean refugees had swollen to a quarter million or more in China, not to mention those who had fled to other surrounding countries such as Russia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand.

Accordingly, we at Helping Hands Korea decided that, in addition to helping malnourished North Koreans in their hometowns, we would actively address the needs of North Korean refugees in China by devoting a significant proportion of collected donations to this second crisis. To make it easier for donors to distinguish between the two projects in designating their donations, we have maintained the name Ton-a-Month Club to denote famine relief within North Korea and now use Helping Hands Korea to specify refugee assistance. Donors are invited to clarify how they would like their donations used.

TWO CRITICAL ADVANTAGES IN HELPING NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

The more we analyzed this second initiative, the clearer it became that support for refugee “safehouses” and “secret orphanages” for North Korean children in China, carried with it a double advantage. On one hand, the quality of monitoring our donors’ aid, a chronic difficulty in direct or indirect dealing with North Korean bureaucrats, was immediately enhanced through our newfound direct access to refugees. By assisting refugees, we were personally able to deliver donations to like-minded humanitarian workers and receive feedback from the refugees themselves. Hence, we received the implicit and enormous strategic advantage of eliminating from our aid delivery chain the “middleman” of the North Korean bureaucracy and its well-documented and dubious agenda in food distribution. [See reports on this issue from *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (Doctors Without Borders), Oxfam, etc.] A second advantage, in our view, when helping refugees is the ability we have of directly rewarding those individuals who exhibit personal bravery and the sovereignty of free choice by leaving destitution and oppression so rampant in their own country and forging into the unknown in the quest of a better life, despite the inherent dangers of an unprotected existence in China or Russia.

Although refugee children naturally rank first in our list of priorities for assistance, it must be emphasized that tragedy can be witnessed at virtually every age group of North Koreans hiding in China. For example, we have brought medical assistance to a refugee who had fallen victim to a loan shark in northeastern China. An aid worker had attempted to place the threatened man in safety, but was short of resources at the time of the first visit. When I accompanied the aid worker to China on the following visit, the loan shark had already extracted his “pound of flesh” from the refugee, by hiring someone to stab the male refugee in the face and putting out one eye. The aid worker was almost beside himself with grief, feeling responsible for the loss of the refugee’s eye.

The extreme urgency of the dual crisis of long-term famine within North Korea and the North Korean refugee crisis in China and other surrounding countries, including Russia, can be encapsulated in the story I recently wrote of 10 year-old North Korean boy, Yoo Chul Min, whom I met in April and June of 2001 in China.

WHO WAS YOO CHUL MIN? AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A 10 year-old North Korean refugee boy hiding in China, made a sobering decision that was light years away from what most other elementary 4th graders are pre-occupied with—a life-and-death gamble to cross the China-Mongolian border under the cover of darkness.

His name was Yoo Chul Min and his decision resulted in a heart-rending tragedy. Joining five other North Koreans, also desperate for even a fleeting glimpse of freedom, Chul Min and his companions became disoriented for 26 hours in the arid, desert-like conditions of the Mongolian frontier. Years of gradual malnutrition in North Korea had weakened Yoo Chul Min’s body and the normal reserve of endurance and resistance to the elements one would expect of a healthy preteen boy were sadly lacking. Yoo Chul Min died from exhaustion and exposure on July 7th, 2001. His body was carried across the Mongolian border by the remaining refugee team when they finally gained their bearings.

Perhaps I’ve taken a particular interest in this story because it so happened that Chul Min and my paths crossed in the course of my work in Helping Hands Korea. I had met and just begun getting to know this 10 year-old on two occasions, shortly before his death, this year. At the time, he was under the protection of courageous Korean missionaries in the Yenbian (ethnic Chinese-Korean region) district of northeast China.

I remember noticing how withdrawn this boy was. Because he had lived in China for over a year, he did not immediately strike me as malnourished and his clothes were clean. I noticed with some amusement that he would never take off his baseball cap, even inside the house of my friend. My curiosity grew into a little personal challenge to spend some time with him and see if I could find a way to break through that shell of suspicion of foreigners and get a friendship started.

I was told by those caring for him that Chul Min was very studious and doing well in a Chinese elementary school. One day in June of this year, I happened to spot on the missionary’s bookshelf the Korean version of a book that I had read countless times with my own five children, in English, as they were growing up, *The Picture Bible*. Despite his initial reluctance to sit down next to a dreaded American, Chul Min’s curiosity about the book seemed to get the upper hand, and soon we were leafing through the wonderfully illustrated volume together and he was eagerly reading the Korean text aloud. It became the bridge for what I hoped would

be a real friendship. Little did I realize at that time, that death was only a month away for my little newfound friend.

In the days that followed the jarring news of Chul Min's sudden death, despite our urgent entreaties, the security officials in Mongolia did not agree to wait for Chul Min's father to arrive in Ulan Bator to identify his son's body and to be present at his burial. Mr. Yoo, Chul Min's father, himself was a recent arrival to South Korea as a North Korean refugee from China, and an extra amount of time was needed for him to obtain South Korean travel documents. (The adjoining photo shows Chul Min's father, a new Christian, mourning his son's death shortly after seeing his son's grave for the first time on the barren Mongolian desert near the China/Mongolian border)

THE DANGERS FACED BY REFUGEE AID WORKERS IN CHINA

Tragedy befalls aid workers in China also with unnerving frequency in the course of their humanitarian labors. One courageous aid worker in China personally takes care of six separate refugee shelters in China. Approached from behind in the dark over one year ago, he was stabbed in the stomach by an unseen assailant. The likeliest suspect of this hideous crime is one of thousands of undercover North Korean agents who operate in China to track down, capture and forcefully repatriate refugees back to North Korea against their will.

Due to complicated security circumstances and a very narrow timeframe, it was necessary to bring a physician to a quiet corner of a transportation terminal restaurant to administer necessary antibiotics to the aid worker as this maneuver was shielded from the view of authorities by other members of the aid community at the table.

Many Christian and other humanitarian activists are fully aware that they face arrest and imprisonment as a result of providing food, shelter and guidance to safety to the North Korean refugees. One such heroic activist is South Korean evangelist Chun Ki Won. On the night of December 30th, 2001 Evangelist Chun was arrested near the tiny border town of Dungqi (150 km southwest of Hilar) in the northeastern area of Inner Mongolia, PRC, while attempting to help twelve North Korean refugees cross the border from China to Mongolia. To the best of our knowledge, two of the 12 North Korean refugees have been repatriated to North Korea in violation of the 1951 International Convention on Refugees of which the People's Republic of China is a signatory. Ten still remain incarcerated at a military facility near Manzhouli, Inner Mongolia. I had the privilege of making four separate mission trips with Evangelist Chun to Northeast China as well as the China/North Korean border area in the year 2001 (January, April, June and December). During these four journeys, I had many opportunities to observe Mr. Chun's personal courage and sacrificial spirit as exhibited in lending vital assistance to North Korean refugees who were being hunted down by both Chinese security officials and North Korean secret police operating clandestinely within China. We opened and outfitted refugee shelters together, helped to transfer refugees to new locations within China, and provided briefings to refugees who insisted on making the hazardous bid to freedom by crossing the Chinese border with Mongolia. In certain cases, the North Korean refugees were in such a state of desperation due to North Korean secret police being in hot pursuit of their whereabouts that they declared their willingness to try to cross the "no man's land" between China and Mongolia with or without assistance from activists.

During many months of imprisonment with only the bare minimum of diplomatic attention from his embassy in Beijing, Evangelist Chun has been subjected to degrading treatment including cleaning prison toilets and carrying human excrement to a waste area on the prison grounds. It is likely that he will be charged with the crimes of either smuggling or human trafficking, whereas in reality he has been carrying out the Biblical injunction: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down our lives for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (I John 3:16) In fact, he has been giving aid and encouragement to true refugees, although China fails to recognize their status. I respectfully and strongly request that the Committee on International Relations exert its considerable influence on the government of the People's Republic of China to petition the release of Evangelist Chun Ki Won from prison.

In closing, I wish to make the point that the heartbreaking realities of Yoo Chul Min's death and Mr. Chun's humiliating imprisonment for helping North Korean refugees are all the more tragic because they were by no means inevitable. Had the relevant nation-signatories of the UN Charter for Refugees of 1951 in the north-eastern Asian region acted upon principle and carried out their commitments to relevant charters, neither of these grievous events need have occurred.

My appearance before your Committee is largely as a representative voice for many of my colleagues in the activist community who daily lay down their lives in sacrificial service for North Korean refugees. Due to security concerns and in some cases imprisonment, these unsung heroes are unable to appear before you. But I submit to you that this small 'ragtag' group of volunteers has undertaken an enormous humanitarian challenge single-handedly that international organizations such as the UNHCR, with all their influence and expertise, should be addressing. However, in actual practice, the UNHCR office in China and many governments in the region have retreated from the actual fray to occupying passive seats in the grandstands as this human drama plays out, essentially taken hostage by political and economic compromises with the major violators of international treaties that should protect the rights of North Korean refugees. By doing so, they have abdicated an active role on the playing field upon which hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake.

I am confident, however, that this august body, the House of Representatives, rich in tradition of heeding the cries of the oppressed, will not follow suit. I believe it will issue forth with the clear sound of a trumpet, speaking in an uncompromising voice in defense of the starving, intimidated populace of North Korea and the hundreds of thousands of refugees the North's failed economy and style of governance have spawned.

On behalf of the North Korean refugees and the activist community that serves them, I thank you.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you very much, Mr. Peters. And I want to thank the panel. Let me just begin with a couple of questions here.

There is an ongoing debate on whether public diplomacy, very high pitched, would be helpful or harmful to the refugee situation. And then a second debate that underscores it that is even more important, whether the world community should be encouraging programs that would create far greater numbers of refugees or whether it's better off to try assist the North Korea population at home.

Do you have any views on this particular subject? Mr. Becker?

Mr. BECKER. Yes, I do. I think that there hasn't been enough public attention given to the plight of the refugees and to their testimony. It's very hard to get this issue on television to get it to reaching a major, international audience because of the way that China controls access to the border areas and to the refugees because they're constantly in hiding and the people who help them are afraid. And therefore, you have very, very difficult conditions in reporting what they have to say.

I think the more attention that is given to this, the easier it would become.

Mr. LEACH. Does anyone else wish to comment on this?

Ms. DELAUNAY. From the field workers' point of view, we have sort of a real dilemma between the willingness to testify about what's going on and the fear that operations would be stopped. It is also difficult for the refugees themselves who would like to say to the world what's going on in that country, and what kind of suffering they are enduring. But at the same time, they know that it would be their relatives and their friends in danger. So it's a constant dilemma in testifying on this issue.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Powell?

Mr. POWELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The point, I guess, that the World Food Program would like to make is that we have a massive number of people within the borders of DPRK who simply don't get enough to eat each day every day of the year. I think that the situation of those who leave the country and cross the border into China is alarming and needs all the attention that this Committee and other Committees that might address it.

Far more profound to us is what happens to those who stay? We have 6.4 million of them today who are WFP beneficiaries. The numbers are clearly greater than those that we provide assistance to. So in looking at the needs of the 153,000, please do not let us forget the 6.5 million, 90 percent of whom are women and children who will not get across the border.

Mr. LEACH. Well, the international community has yet to come to grips with the second sanctuary issue. I mean, we understand the dilemma of China. They may get more than they would like, but where would they go after China? And it's impressive to me how few have gone to South Korea to date, not how many. And the rest of the world community isn't offering second sanctuary either. Do you think that is a subject that ought to be raised as a matter of international diplomacy? Mr. Peters?

Mr. PETERS. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure I fully understood. Are you saying that the number of refugees are relatively limited that have come into South Korea, so where could the rest go?

Mr. LEACH. Well, should not more go to South Korea or are there other alternatives?

Mr. PETERS. Certainly, in my opinion, many more could go to South Korea. At the moment, the facility that is preparing North Korean defectors for life in South Korea is being expanded. I believe in the coming month they will be able to handle 300 at a time, and that would only translate into 1200 per year. Frankly, I think it's too little. It's too late. It would certainly need to be improved, and the flood of refugees seems to be building.

But it would strike me also as a distinct possibility that other nations could begin considering absorbing the overflow of refugees. Frankly speaking, I'm not at all convinced that taking North Koreans who basically have lived in a failed economy for decades and tossing most of them into the high speed dynamic, almost overwhelming environment of Seoul or other large South Korean cities—it's difficult for me to accept that as an acceptable solution for many of them.

It would seem like a "decompression area" would be preferable. Perhaps, farms in central Asia. If certain central Asian nations would possibly consider taking some refugees, and in some cases, we have indications that Mongolia is not against North Koreans living and staying there on a temporary basis as long as they do not become a burden upon their own social safety net, which is extremely fragile as it is. But it would seem to me that with sufficient support from the outside, that in many cases North Korean farmers, for example, could be introduced gradually to a market economy instead of suddenly being fast-forwarded 3 or 4 decades economically into a very fast paced South Korean society in which many times—all too many times—they fail and other social problems result.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Mr. Becker and then I'll conclude.

Mr. BECKER. I know that the UNHCR in Beijing has often tried to negotiate some kind of deal with the Chinese government which would allow them to set up some kind of centers where they could assist the refugees, you know, if they were needing food or aid, give them temporary shelter, give them basic requirements and then,

encourage them to go back, or if they wanted to claim political asylum, to do so and go through the customary procedures. This has constantly been refused by the Chinese government. They've turned this option down.

I know many NGOs have also approached the Chinese government, offering to do something of this nature. I think if there was a bit more pressure on the Chinese government, they might agree to this. And secondly, I think the people—the North Koreans who have come over—are very much feared by the North Korean government when they return because when they come back they tell everyone that they've seen something of the outside world and it's quite different from the picture painted by North Korean propaganda. That's a huge shock and that could potentially make a huge impact on North Korean society and sort of push forward some change. Thank you.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you, sir. Mr. Faleomavaega?

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly appreciate the testimonies that have been provided. I don't know whether I feel more depressed or encouraged in terms of trying to provide a solution to the problem that I don't think any government or even the world community has the capability of resolving simply because we're talking about a totalitarian and a complete dictatorship.

And I get the very strong impression, after listening to Mr. Becker and Ms. Delaunay kind of the barriers went down. We're not doing enough. And then, after hearing Mr. Powell saying, well, we're doing a lot of things. But I get the strong impression, after listening to the witnesses this morning, that it comes to the bottom line that the North Korean government actually controls when, where, and how the food the aid system is providing is distributed.

I get the strong impression, also, that in a very cold, calculated way, the dictatorship or the regime makes sure that the Army is properly fed, but as far as women and children, they're expendable. And with a country of 23 million people, it just makes it more complex to me in trying to figure out how we're going to feed a starving population when you know that the government that controls the system controls us. So Mr. Powell commented earlier that we are making strides, but to what extent are we really serious about this?

Mr. Becker suggested that our food aid program is somewhat of a failed policy. At the same time, if we don't provide some kind of food aid, you're going to have people starving to death.

I'm asking for solutions and I wanted to ask you, Mr. Powell, you've been there personally. Do you think that we are making strides in providing this kind of aid given the fact that we're dealing with a governmental system that is totally repressive? Are they really serious about wanting the world community to give them assistance or it is because they have a policy or a system of priorities that is quite different from the rest of the world community?

I'd like to ask Mr. Powell what his impressions are because it seems to me that the leadership of the North Korean government really has no basis of really considering whether or not women and children starve to death. It's irrelevant. And to what extent has the food aid been given to make sure that the Army is fully fed?

I'd like to ask Mr. Powell is a portion of the food aid given really going to provide for the needs of the Army more so than the general population?

Mr. POWELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. If I can deal with the last part of the question first. The answer is yes. What the North Korean military does, and the power does, is the take first cut at the national harvest. And they take what they want in the amount they want it at the time they want it. I think that is common ground between the North Korean and ourselves and almost anyone else that deals with that issue seriously.

There are at least two donors who provide food bilaterally. That is, they give it to the government of DPRK and say, please, do good things with this food. One of those countries is in China. The other one is the Republic of Korea. I would guess, that through you, Mr. Chairman, those countries would not only want to see the bulk of the population DPRK feed. I should imagine that would not want to have a hungry Army on their borders. So I can understand why some people might want to give undirected food assistance.

For our part, what we are concerned about is to provide food to the most vulnerable in that country. The most vulnerable in that country are pregnant women, nursing mothers and small children up to the age of 16—secondary school kids. The other extraordinarily vulnerable group are the elderly. Dealing first with those who are most young, what we do is there is a map that is provided in our package which shows where we have set up, 1816, what we call "local production facilities."

What these facilities seek to do is to produce food particularly designed to meet the food, nutrition, and micronutrient needs of women and small children, children in pediatric hospitals. So the food tracks from the port of arrival at a distribution plan decided by the World Food Program in collaboration with DPRK, but it is decided by us.

We have a port captain who ensures that the quantity of foods that arrives is the quantity of food that is delivered. When that food is not in 50 kg bags as we ask, that food is bagged at the port before it leaves the port. All of those bags have the markings of the donor. That food is then taken to the sites which are marked as these "local food production facilities."

It is there, combined with other food inputs, micronutrient inputs provided by UNICEF where it is converted into rice soy milk for CSM and so on. That is provided then, from the institution from that production plant, to the various institutions, whether they be hospitals, pediatric hospitals; whether they be orphanages; whether they be the institutions which children of ages between 6 months and 4 years are placed from date of birth—from that age.

What we are, therefore, able to do is to track the food through that system to where it is consumed by the beneficiaries at that site. When I talk about monitoring and the number of monitoring visit is, I'm talking about that whole chain. The chain which starts from saying which port should this food be delivered to, to how much goes to which food production plant to how much biscuit for CSM is produced to which institution it is delivered and in what quantities. That is what our monitors look at. We know what the numbers are.

I agree with you, however, implicitly, that it's not impossible to fiddle the numbers. That's why it's so important to be able to look at the children. Look at them. Do they have the visible characteristics of those who are acutely malnourished or do they not. When you see where the place they ate and the time they ate. When they come into a room, does it look as if it's the first time in the room. Do they know where to sit? Does it look as if it's the first time they've had this kind of food?

All the practical things that you and I would do where we to want to know is this the first time this child has done this. What we find is the answer is no. It is a consistent pattern, and that we find the visible observation; namely, that there is a sharp decline in acute malnutrition and the children seem used to eating this food at this time. And when we track back the numbers, they match.

The bottom line, through you, Mr. Chairman, through that arrangements for those kinds of food stuffs, we don't go near the public distribution system—direct distribution, through the chain.

Mr. FALCOMA. My time, I know, is nearly up, Mr. Chairman, but I just want to say that the predicament that I and Members of the Committee find ourselves in, is that we feel so helpless. We feel like we know what the problems are. The international community doesn't seem to be outraged. I don't hear the United Nations coming out and putting pressure on the North Korean Army to do something about this serious problem. And as Mr. Becker suggested earlier, we have a failed policy of the food aid, but what do you suggest, Mr. Becker? How do you suggest resolving the issue? And I'll end with that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BECKER. I don't have a pat solution either. I think of the problems is there isn't enough media attention to it because you can't get pictures of what really goes on in North Korea, and you can't get reliable witnesses—witnesses that are acceptable to everyone. I think the international community has looked to South Korea's Sunshine Policy to find a way out of this impasse, and unfortunately, it now seems to have run its course without being successful.

Therefore, I think another possible initiative would be for the United States to organize more of an internationally coordinated policy on North Korea, which would bring together the food issues, the security issues, and the economic issues together in order to sort of bring this to some sort of resolution.

I mean, it's impossible—not impossible, but it's extraordinary that a famine aid program should have gone on for so long and without apparently an end in sight, and having reached that stage and having failed with the Sunshine Policy, I mean, it must be time for a fresh initiative which would bring more of the actors together to agree on a plan of action.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Royce?

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The panel mentioned basically that the Army gets the food and the people starve. Is this a situation of indifference to the people by the ruling elite or is there, perhaps, a consensus policy to keep people hungry? Does the regime want the North Korean people, or at least many of them weak, and that's the question I pose to the panel. I pose that be-

cause there seems to be a policy of starvation. And this would not be the first time in history where there is a state policy to keep the serfs weak.

Certainly in Sparta, Lycurgus, developed a system where the spartans were kept healthy and strong. And the concept was to keep the serfs as weak as possible, and periodically, when they became too numerous to actually eliminate a large percentage of the serf population in Sparta.

My father took photographs at Dachau, at the liberation of that camp. Again, there was a state policy to take those who did not support the Reich—to take those who were the Jews or the social democratic, the monarchist and the leftist, and if they didn't support the Reich, to literally put them in camps and work them to death and to starve them to death.

So there are only some 43 counties that you do not have access to in the country out of some 203; and those are the areas where we hear about these work camps. These concentration camps where people are being worked and starved to death. My question is, is that state policy in North Korea? I'd ask any of the members of the panel who might want to respond to answer.

Mr. PETERS. Congressman Royce, I don't pretend to be an expert on the ongoings on inside North Korea, but I think it is—I believe Mr. Becker referred to the fact that North Korean society is stratified, basically, according loyalty to the regime. In effect, there is even up to, I understand, 52 distinct levels within society. But the primary litmus test as how high up the scale you go, of course, is your loyalty to the Kim Jong-Il regime. It seems that it's absolutely correct that food is used as a reward or as a weapon regarding loyalty. I, frankly, believe that and see evidence of it in testimonies from defectors that I think it's without question. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. Let's talk about the 43 areas, Mr. Powell, where you cannot go. What's your anecdotal information about what goes on there. I've read a book about what purports to go on there. It's hard for me to believe that, that type of horror could exist at this time. That there could be that level of abrogation of rights and starvation. But what do you hear is going on in that sector?

Mr. POWELL. Thank you very much, Chairman. I do apologize on this particular element. I am not able to enlighten the Committee simply because we do not know. We are absolutely refused access. We cannot pass through those areas in transit to somewhere else. So we simply don't go there at all.

If I might just spend a moment on your previous question. There are two parts to it. The first is that the country simply doesn't produce enough food to feed itself. It doesn't have the foreign exchange to buy what is needed and it doesn't have the creditworthiness to borrow on terms to get it. So all we're talking about each year is whether the deficit in food terms is 1.2 to 3 million tons of cereals or it's 2.2 million tons of food. So it's massive deficit.

So I don't think there should be, in a sense, a misunderstanding of a policy of starvation. It is simply they do not produce enough to feed themselves and they cannot find a way to buy it.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, let me ask you this. I mean, money is fungible. For those of us that have spent some time in Korea and seen an Army that's at over a million strong and one of the largest in man-

power. One of the largest armies in the world. It is certainly odd to see a military build up that is far in excess of anything they could possibly use while people are starving to death. And so it does beg the question, since those resources could go to keep the rural population alive, why would you put 80 percent of the national budget, in terms of military buildup? I guess that's a rhetorical question.

Sophie, would you have any observations?

Ms. DELAUNAY. I'd be happy to add a few comments to these discussions. I think we all agree that there is a food shortage in North Korea. The point is not to even try to estimate them because at the moment it's not transparent enough to do so. But I think that it's time to question why we have not been able to solve the problem. And where all this food has gone.

We have some information that it goes to the Army and that the Army is well-fed. But we also have information that there is food on the black market. That is not just the South Korean rice or the Chinese rice. There is also what they call the U.N. drugs. The North Koreans, they know how to recognize maize coming from China or from the Western world or from their own country. They know all this, and they are able to give you the price of each item.

And when you meet them regularly, you realize that there is a real economy. And that they are all commodities available in the black market at the moment in North Korea. And that the prices are fluctuating and the fluctuating of prices are quite similar with the amount of humanitarian assistance which arrives in the country. And it's normal because the only availability comes from the aid. So I think there are some resources now in North Korea. And according to the refugees, you can find everything you need. The problem they have at the moment is that they have no money to buy it.

Mr. ROYCE. So you're saying, what you testified to, was that as you interview these refugees they have not received food through these programs. Many of them have never had a meal, and yet, at the same time you find that on the black market. That food is available, presumably, it's either through corruption or the government has a policy of earning the exchange—their hard currency by taking that money, and instead of feeding the people with it, the North Korean government is basically selling it.

Ms. DELAUNAY. I don't know exactly what are the mechanism. What I've heard was that there are some commodities, a lot of commodities, more than before—they say that's much more than before '95. And that if they had the money, they would be able to have a decent life there.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Rohrabacher?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. First, I'd like to ask Mr. Becker about, and this may be off the set of focus of the hearing, but could you tell us why you were fired from your job as at the newspaper.

Mr. BECKER. Well, I went to see the editor about 3 weeks ago to express my concerns about the way the coverage of China and, indeed, the North Korean issue was being changed. And that there had been an effort by the Hong Kong authority after October to

sort of bring the South China Morning Post under control. And they'd begun sort of issuing demands that all the foreign journalists should be replaced by ethnic Chinese journalists.

And there was sort of a compromise negotiated. And from that moment on, I began to notice that they were changing the way we were reporting on China. We couldn't get access to funds to fund our bureau. We've been restricted on the trips we go. The stories were being changed. And for instance, stories on North Korea were being changed so that stuff was being added to my copy saying that the North Korean famine was due to harsh winters and so on.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. So you're seeing here an example of creeping totalitarianism and the control that the very evil that we're talking about in North Korea is just actually creeping along and even expanding even outside of Korea.

Mr. BECKER. Yes, I thought that the Chinese authorities in Hong Kong were trying to bring the very lively Hong Kong media under control. I wanted to express my concerns privately and to sort of try to change things by arguing this wasn't really necessary—this self-censorship. But my criticisms were not acceptable. So I was fired.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Being a former journalist myself, I totally sympathize with what you're saying and for those who think they're going to feed the crocodile with self-censorship, let us note that they will be eaten by the crocodile in very short order. And that self-censorship and the type of bending over backwards and trying to placate these terrorist regimes, gangster regimes, will always lead to a North Korea situation in the end where you have a—well, however we would like to characterize the mental state of their leader and the leaders of the regime. But we do know they are willing to see large numbers of their own people starve to death while they pump money into their military establishment; perhaps, out of some physiological paranoia.

What a tragedy that is. And this is not something that has just happened in Korea. As my friend, Mr. Royce, has indicated. Historically, we can see these things have happened in the past. I'm sorry that you, personally, have had to face this; but I think that the world needs to know that when a journalist is censored, it's just another step into the abyss and into the blackness and darkness of totalitarianism and toward the direction of this type of deprivation of freedom and just even the basics of life for normal people.

In terms of what's been going on in Korea, I understand that there is about 350,000 tons of wheat are shipped per year from the United States to North Korea, is that right?

Mr. BECKER. Yes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We also provide, and others provide hundreds of millions of dollars of fuel oil to North Korea?

Mr. POWELL. In technical terms, Mr. Chairman, the international community pays a subsidy on the amount of fuel—the cost of transporting the food from port to the county warehouses. That works about 25 percent of actual costs. It's actually \$8.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. First of all, I respect each and every one of you for your good hearts and your humanitarian instincts. And who wants to see a little boy die like that. I mean, obviously, I want

to commend you for using that as an example to us of just how dramatic this is. Even though, it's like the firing of a newspaper editor. It sort of creeps up on you and sometimes it's hard to identify how evil a situation really is until you put it in the life of a boy who didn't need to die and was actually murdered by the system when you get down to it.

I don't think the United States of America should be involved in subsidizing a regime like this. But at the same time, we have total sympathy for the people of that country. I would hope that our desire for stability in the short run and helping those people in the short run does not prevent a change in the regime in the long run. And I would just like your thoughts on that. Are we, by using our hearts, preventing the total break down of the regime, which in the long run would be what would be best for everyone? Whoever wants to comment is fine with me.

Mr. PETERS. I personally feel that the very beginning of our little Ton-of-Month effort, and in fact, it began with a small prayer around our kitchen table. And the scripture that we received was simply "If thy enemy hungers, feed him." But after 6 years of doing this, I feel that we should do it as intelligently, judiciously, wisely and in the most informed way possible. And I'm not convinced that enormous state-to-state transfers is that way, frankly.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Go ahead.

Mr. PETERS. Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, the operation in North Korea does raise the most acute moral and ethnical dilemmas. The first part of the dilemma is exactly as you have spelled it out. Is this the kind of arrangement which will keep the regime, the kind that is so distasteful to so many, in power for a longer period of time? If you strongly believe that to be the case, you would take a particular course of action.

The other view focuses on who are the victims. The victims are the women and they're the children. And as President Reagan said a hungry child knows no politics. So the humanitarian community takes the view that it is the ethnical consideration that needs to take primacy. But we would certainly subscribe to the point of view that it needs to be done thoughtfully, intelligently and in a way which builds toward a better future than the present. Thank you.

Mr. POWELL. Well, I go back to my earlier point. When you deliver aid, you enter into a kind of negotiation, and the negotiations so far are always over security issues. So that, for instance, the Japanese are now negotiating over delivering food because they want to know what happened to these Japanese who have been kidnapped or allegedly kidnapped. There are the South Koreans who are offering food only if they get a summit or some kind of diplomatic concessions. So all these food deals or the fuel that the United States is delivering to North Korea, it's all related to some security issue. And I think the food aid negotiations should be concentrated on extracting concessions on the monitoring of food and the monitoring of the health of the population so that, at least, the food is given; but at least we really know who is getting that aid. And the public is really assured that the most vulnerable members are getting the medical aid they need. I think the failure of the past 7 years has been to allow the WFP to negotiate on its own

really and it has to be the full backing of the international community to push the North Koreans on this.

I think, in addition, there should be a sort of step-by-step program to bring the North Koreans to the point where they would do the kind of economic reforms that we've seen in China. I think there hasn't been a coordinated effort to do this. And I know the UNDP tried to do that a few years ago, but there were such splits within the major actors that it was ineffective and the North Koreans just walked away from it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. One last note and then—thank you, Mr. Chairman, for indulging me just to say let none of us leave any doubt that we're talking about a regime that is a disgrace to all human values, and it's pathetic to see the way they are treating their people. And just the ignorance and vile of that regime is beyond description. So I want to make sure that our friends in the press who may or may not have the freedom to say these things that need to be said, need to understand while the American people can be very proud that we are helping people who are hungry; especially, women and children who are hungry, we hold the regime of North Korea in total disdain and we are siding with the people of North Korea and the Korean people and not their pathetic and disgusting government.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you. Mr. Kirk.

Mr. KIRK. Dana, what do you really think? I want to give you a face of North Korea that I saw. I don't know if you can see this. This is Kim Yo Balk. Someday I hope to go back to Ho Jang to find her if she's surviving. We think of North Korea as a weapons factory, but this is the North Korea that I know and have seen on so many faces.

We have a situation in which North Korea has produced a lot of things. Jasper, you're not a free voting journalist. Any idea how much—North Korea has shot missiles over Japan—No Dong missile, Taepo Dong missiles. Any idea how much they've spent building missiles?

Mr. BECKER. I think it's clear evidence they've devoted an enormous amount of resources for a poor country to this program that should have gone into feeding the population. And I think they see this military hardware as a way of extracting money from the international community as a kind of blackmail. And that they actually hold the vulnerable population hostage, saying, if you don't give us the aid without conditions, these people will die. And I think their sort of negotiating strategy is now pretty clear. There must come a point when the international community finds it unacceptable and reacts to it.

Mr. KIRK. Yes. At a meeting I had in Pyongyang with Kim Ka Ywang they said we're stop selling missiles to Iran for a billion bucks. It's unfortunate. Now the Government of Israel now is responding to the North Korean threat because the Shihab III missile, which you see running down the streets of Tehran is just a No Dong that's been repainted with an Iranian flag put on it.

And we know that North Korea missile is pointed at Jerusalem. So it's a difficult problem to take on. We also have the KEDO reactor being built by the international community, but it's sort of a deal that doesn't seem to make sense. Two white elephant nuclear

reactions in the middle of North Korea. But my view of North Korea there is no power grid to connect these reactors to. There is no way to get the electrical—is that your understanding of what we're building here?

Mr. BECKER. The point is, and the country's already littered with all kinds of white elephants which have failed to put North Korea on path of self-sufficiency. The huge barrages, which they built on the east coast were designed, actually, to solve the food problem and never worked. They had the—I think the UNDP started to help them with economic development aid, and the only investors there were some Hong Kong casinos. I mean, it's absolutely ridiculous what's been going on in North Korea and what many countries have encouraged to happen.

All of these things are complete irrelevant to solving North Korea's problems.

Mr. KIRK. North Korea is a country of many white elephants while children starve. My favorite is the pyramid which is in the center of Pyongyang—a 105-story building. But it was so sloppily built that the elevator corridors going up the building are like this. So the building is useless. No one is going to walk up 105 floors by the stairway. And so it's a monument to the incompetence of the regime in the middle of the capital city.

But North Korea stands out for other reasons, and to new lows in human rights. We heard all of these reports of 9-27 prisons. September 27, 1995, I believe, Kim Jong-Il issued this order to arrest all hungry children outside of their home county. The security of these facilities doesn't seem to be too heavy. I ran into dozens of children in China who had escaped from 9-27 prisons.

Now we've heard updated reports that maybe these hungry child prisons don't exist anymore. Any news on whether 9-27 prisons are still operating or not?

Mr. BECKER. I've heard that many of them have been closed down. That the order has been to send these children back to their home villages. But as in the Chinese famine, I mean, the number of homeless or orphans or children who have lost their parents in some way—can't find out where they are is still quite enormous. I've spoken to children who even been arrested when they going begging around Pyongyang.

But the problem with North Korea's response to the plight of the homeless children is that they, themselves, don't really recognize the famine for what it actually is. They don't themselves really live in the sort of reality of what the problems of the country are. So they continue to live a kind of fantasy, propaganda world, which prevents them from actually responding rationally to what is happening in the country.

Mr. KIRK. When you turn on the TV in Pyongyang, you'll get videos on how to make Pomjay, alternative food where they're stripping barks off trees and teaching people how to boil this stuff up. The reason why though we see so many kids without their parents is the structure of Korean culture. That when the food runs out, the first people who agree to starve to death, or any many cases commit suicide are the grandparents and the parents and then that leaves the homeless kids.

I interviewed some refugees in Yanji who talked about how their grandparents had committed suicide, and that leaves these black swallow children then moving to the North, but the refugee situation is bleak. These people have no idea what China looks like. They have no map. So by the time they crawl across the Tumen River, they're in Jang By Mountain being hunted down by these gangs that sell the girls into sex slavery and almost as horrible conditions in China for the refugees.

So here my other question is we started a huge cross border program in other countries I remember. I remember a big one, for example, in Afghanistan that we ran out of Pakistan. Is it time to launch a cross border assistance program for North Korea?

Ms. DELAUNAY. Well, I think first of all, we should recognize these people as refugees. As people who are starving and have come for help. This is the first step. If they are not recognized, there is nothing we can do.

Secondly, you have to be aware that also on the other side of the border control is increasing. And maybe Tim, I think he knows better than me, but from our experience most of the refugees come from bordering provinces. And still now a lot of North Korean people do not have access to China, either because it's too far away and they cannot go there or because they have no idea. They don't know that they might be able to get some food from there.

Mr. KIRK. I think there is a real moral dilemma that we've seen here that assistance groups that need access to the DPRK cannot condemn the government because then they will be denied access and cannot carry out their basic humanitarian function. So we've got to develop here in the Congress a two track operation.

Human rights groups, which speak out and deliver the clear message of what's happening and better access to radio-free Asia and hopefully getting cameras inside. And meanwhile boosting up the humanitarian organizations and their presence and U.S. NGOs in North Korea, but not asking them to do the heavy lifting on human rights because they will be shut down the moment they condemn the regime.

It's that human rights operation that we haven't really launched yet where we're broadcasting the true story of what's going on into North Korea. And we're assisting North Korean groups in China, in South Korea and elsewhere to get the message out. And I think that's the essential thing. Jasper, am I not right? We see this moral dilemma and we can't force the humanitarian groups to speak out on human rights because then they'll be shut down. But we do have to develop the outside groups that will tell us what's really going on in North Korea.

Mr. BECKER. Yes, I mean, the key is some free-flow of information, and that's why the refugees are so important. That's why it's so important to prevent the Chinese government from hunting these people down and expelling them. Because if we don't have the refugees we won't have any idea what is really going on in the country because in a totalitarian regime like that, I personally believe, with all due respect to Mr. Powell, that it's quite easy to hoodwink visitors and to spend them a line. And therefore, you need these alternative sources of information. And you need much more information going into the country. That should also be a con-

dition of aid, I think. That they should be—people should be allowed to realize the extent to which they're being artificially deprived of the means to make themselves self-sufficient and to feed themselves.

Mr. KIRK. And the last point, the food availability situation. We really should pressure WFP, et cetera, to get a better idea of the food availability situation there. We're not condemning the regime. But to my knowledge, the international community has zero access to any farmers markets in North Korea. Is that correct?

Mr. POWELL. That is correct.

Mr. KIRK. So we have no idea how much a kilogram of rice costs in North Korea. And yet, it is sold—I've seen the satellite images. I forgot the name of the street, Qwan Bach Street in Pyongyang—an enormous 5-mile long market where bulk commodities are sold and the international community assisting North Korea has no idea what the prices are for food in that market. Have you been to Qwan Bach Street?

Mr. POWELL. You are perfectly correct, which is why I mentioned in my introductory statement that access to farmers markets is one of the key issues which looms very high on our agenda for exactly that purpose. I think the point that I would especially like to make on farmers markets is that I actually think there is something to be encouraged and facilitated, not something to be afraid of or call them black markets in order to close them down.

Mr. KIRK. Right. I think the legitimatization of farmers markets is key to increasing food availability. And while we can't force WFP to get into the reactor and find out what's going on there. We should have some pretty hard line on getting WFP to get into the farmers markets to improve food availability distributions, even through micro-loans, which I think would be an enormous help for them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you very much. Let me thank this panel and also express great admiration on behalf of the Congress for the work you do. And several of the observations that have been made are things I'm confident this government is going to have to take seriously in terms of foreign policy initiatives. So we thank you all.

[Recess.]

Mr. LEACH. If the Subcommittee can come back to order. Our second panel is composed of Dr. Norbert Vollertsen, who is a German physician who spent 18 months inside North Korea providing humanitarian medical assistance with access to regions outside Pyongyang. After his expulsion from North Korea in December of 2000, he has traveled the world campaigning for human rights in North Korea.

Mr. Kim Sung Min was a captain in the North Korean Army at the time of his defection in 1996. He appears today as the director of the North Korean Defectors Volunteer Group of the Committee to Help North Korean Refugees, a Seoul-based NGO that collected nearly 12 million signatures inside South Korea supporting refugee status for North Koreans inside China, which it delivered to the United Nations.

Ms. Sun-ok Lee is a former party official inside North Korea and a survivor of several years inside a North Korean political prisoner camp. She's the author of the book *Eyes of the Tailless Animals*, an

account of her imprisonment. And finally, Mr. Lee Young-Kook served as a personal bodyguard for a North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Il, for a decade, and later survived years in a North Korea prison camp before escaping into China and eventually South Korea. And I understand has also written a book about his experience.

We will begin in the order of the introductions with Dr. Vollertsen. Dr. Vollertsen?

STATEMENT OF NORBERT VOLLERTSEN, FORMER MEDICAL DOCTOR INSIDE NORTH KOREA

Dr. VOLLERTSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately, most of the people are gone to lunch. Maybe that's one of the most problems of North Korea. Here are now the eye witness of human rights violations in North Korea, but there is nearly nobody who can listen. There is nearly no more attention. Unfortunately, even some of the congressmen are gone. I think bad timing.

Sorry for that comment. I was a German emergency doctor. I lived in North Korea for 1½ years. I took care for 10 different hospitals, several orphanages and several kindergartens all over North Korea. I got a lot of access. I lived there for 1½ years. And I came closer to those people who are in need.

I learned about food distribution. I learned about the medical situation. The medical situation in North Korea, to make it very brief, there is no power. There is no electricity. There is no medicine. There is no bandage material. There is nothing. After 2 weeks, I got the opportunity to get closer to the North Korean people because there was one burnt patient of mine who suffered from his burns, and there was a skin donation from the North Korean people because they do not have any medical supplies, they gave their own skin to their citizen.

My colleague and I, we joined this operation and afterwards we were awarded this friendship medal. The first two Westerners ever who got such a high honor, and I got closer access to the elite. I was invited to many, many festivities of all those generals and all those who are in charge of power in the foreign ministry.

I learned about this life style in North Korea. Nice buffets and casinos, nightclubs—Chinese nightclubs. I was invited to all those facilities. I learned about internet access. I learned about satellite television. I learned about people who are not in need.

And in the countryside I took care for my patients. These are the people in North Korea. These are the starving children. I wondered about the difference. I do not know where the international food aid is going to. I simply ask this question about the difference of those two pictures. I stayed in North Korea 1½ years. And in the beginning I tried to be a Sunshine politician. I even gave my own skin for one of them.

Then I changed my attitude. I saw there was some more power needed. There is the power of the international media needed in order to show what's going on in North Korea. So I invited many, many of those journalists to a private tour. Together with my friendship medal, I got a so-called VIP passport and a private driving license. I was allowed to travel around on my own without any

minor, without any guide, without any translator, without any driver. So I got a lot of access in North Korea. I made secretly 2500 photos, mainly of my patients in the hospitals. But also, I made secretly a video tape of the situation in these hospitals. And I wanted to show it to the international journalists.

Because this offended the North Korean authorities, I was expelled the first time. The most worst thing happened to my translator. He disappeared. I never saw him again and I never saw his family again. One week later, I found an obviously tortured soldier on the middle of the road. He had cigarette burns on his back and marks where he was beaten—where he was whipped. I tried to get the evidence to show it to you. I was not allowed to do so. I was nearly arrested. My camera was taken away. I was disciplined again. I was threatened to be expelled again. So there is no possibility to get any evidence outside of North Korea. There is no possibility to get any pictures outside of so-called reform institutions.

I learned about this reform institutions by a very simple method. I buy the original criminal law of North Korea in Pyongyang, and there it's written in Article 46,

“A person who encourage others to attempt the overthrow, the disruption or the undermining of the republic or to commit other anti-state criminal acts shall be committed to a reform institution for up to 7 years and there he will be reformed through labor.”

I just wondered about the image of these reform institutions. I thought when this is the normal situation in the children's hospital in North Korea, how it might have looked in those so-called reform institutions. These are labor camps. And you can prove it simply with this criminal law. So I thought the outside world has to know. I wanted to inform the journalists. So after I was expelled in the end of 2000, I went to Seoul. I published books. I spoke to the international journalists, but there was not nearly enough attention.

So we tried to get more attention, more media attention. I think only with the power of the media we can change the situation of those children. I tried to contact those groups who are in charge to take the refugees out of North Korea. And we succeed to stage those incidents in Beijing at those Western embassies. And we will try to do more. I'm from Germany. I think I have to speak out about this. Even when there are only rumors about concentration camps in North Korea, I speak out because you know about German history. We were accused that nobody was outspoken. That nobody acted. We failed to act. So I think that should not happen again.

I have to speak and I have to believe in the power of refugees. That means a land of refugees can lead to the final collapse of a terror regime. And North Korea is a terror regime. They are committing genocide there. They are responsible for those people. They are using food as a weapon against their own people. They are committing genocide, and I think we have to care. As an international community, we have to intervene. And when are talking here about food aid, we have to talk about how to get the collapse of North Korea—of this regime. Otherwise, we're all responsible that we

kept silent because this in North Korea are the real killing fields of the 21st Century. And it's a shame that this is still existing and nobody knows. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Vollertsen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NORBERT VOLLERTSEN, FORMER MEDICAL DOCTOR INSIDE
NORTH KOREA

I was a member of a German medical group, Cap Anamur, and entered North Korea in July 1999 to carry out humanitarian medical assistance. I remained in North Korea for 18 month until I was expelled on Dec. 30, 2000 for publicly denouncing the regime for abusing basic human rights and for its failure to distribute the massive foreign food aid to the people who needed it most.

Early on during my stay I was summoned to treat a workman who had been badly burned by molten iron. My colleague at that time and I volunteered our own skin to be grafted onto this patient in order to show our friendship with the ordinary North Korean citizens. For this action we were nationally acclaimed by the media and awarded with the Friendship medal, the only two western foreigners ever to receive this high honor.

Together with this medal I was issued a somewhat VIP-passport and a driver's license, which allowed me to travel to many areas inaccessible to foreigners and to ordinary North Koreans citizens. I even secretly photographed my patients and their decrepit surroundings.

While acting as an Emergency doctor and looking for the victims of many accidents I also visited a number of other hospitals in other provinces beside the official ten hospitals and three orphanages I was assigned to. In order to deliver clothes to the North Korean children I also visited several dozens kindergartens all over the country side.

In every hospital I visited I found unbelievable deprivation and I was shocked to see patients and orphans in these places. There were no bandages, no scalpels, no antibiotics, no operation facilities—only broken wooden beds supporting starving children waiting to die. In the hospitals the doctors were constantly using empty beer bottles as vessels for dripping, and safety razors as scalpels—there was even an appendectomy without any anaesthesia. They insisted on the serious shortage of medical products and equipment while I found throughout my “investigations” that there was a large stock of bandages and other medical goods in governmental storehouses and in diplomatic shops.

There are two worlds in North Korea. The world for the senior military, the members of the workers party and the country's elite where they are enjoying a nice lifestyle with fancy restaurants, diplomatic shops with European food, nightclubs and even an casino and the world for the ordinary people.

In the world for these ordinary people in a hospital one can see young children, all of them too small for their age, with hollow eyes and skin stretched tight across their faces, wearing blue-and-white-striped pajamas like the children in Auschwitz and Dachau in Hitler's Nazi Germany.

Most of the patients in the hospitals suffer from psychosomatic illnesses, worn out by compulsory drills, the innumerable parades, the assemblies from 6:00 in the morning and the droning propaganda. They are tired and at the end of their tether. Clinical depression is rampant. Alcoholism is common because of mind numbing rigidities and hopelessness of life.

The patients in the North Korean hospitals are looking exhausted and fed up. The condition of the children was deplorable, emaciated, stunted, mute, emotionally depleted. Young adults have no hope, no future and anxiety is everywhere. One can only wonder why there are so many orphans.

Constraints and difficulties of operating in North Korea effect any accountable humanitarian aid assistance. There is no effective monitoring because there is no freedom of movement for the international humanitarian aid agencies. Nobody really knows where the food is going to.

Before Cap Anamur came to North Korea other humanitarian agencies like MSF, OXFAM, ACF and CARE pulled out of North Korea, because they were not allowed to distribute the aid directly to the people. They had to turn it over to the government for the authorities to carry out the distribution and it is not possible to proof if a substantial portion of the foreign aid is going to the army or to those with status or sold to other countries. I myself did not witness any improvement in the availability of food and medicine or in the general living conditions during my whole staying.

Knowledge about the overall humanitarian situation in North Korea is also not available for the normal foreign visitor, aid worker or diplomat. Protection of the humanitarian interests of the population is not possible. General social and political rights, as basic rights grants to human beings in freedom of speech, the press, assembly, demonstration, ideology, religion and association are restricted in North Korea.

There is no activity in any of the churches in Pyongyang. It is a showcase for all the foreign visitors. When we were shown around the “priest” was only talking about the money-investment for the church, Kim Jong-IL and his goodwill towards the Christian community but there was no word about religion. And—what surprised us the most—when the priest talked about the open service in the church every Sunday morning we found all the seats in the church full of dust—never used in the last months, maybe years. . . . Also whenever I passed the church on a Sunday morning there was actually no activity—not even one of the 300 or 400 Christians the priest was talking about.

In North Korea the life of the workers has reached its limit, the life of the peasants is in a desperate condition too. The deprivation of the basic right to exist is obvious. The ordinary people are starving and dying. Violation of the freedom of personal inviolability and conscience by unwarranted arrest and detention is common and one can only imagine what the conditions are like in the so-called “reform institutions”, where entire families are imprisoned when any member does or says something that offends the regime. These camps are closed to all foreigners, even the International Federation of the Red Cross has been denied access.

In the last Stalinist country on earth sexual violence against women, used like modern “comfort women”, forced labor and torture is an important mean for maintaining the suppression of any opposition. A repressive apparatus is acting whenever there is any criticism and the constriction of human rights by intelligence surveillance, shadowing, wiretapping and mail interception is enormous. The oppressive nature of the police forces is evident and obvious at every street corner.

If the main medical diagnosis in North Korea is fear and depression because of man-made policy and not because of “natural disasters” one has to think about the right therapy and to speak out publicly about repression and human right abuses.

I realized that the only way to rescue people in North Korea in poverty and difficulty is to let the world know the real state of this country. So according to my extended possibilities with the friendship medal I guided around Pyongyang a group of journalists accompanying Mrs Albright, the then U.S. Secretary of State who visited North Korea in the autumn of 2000. Additionally, I spoke to every diplomat and after I found an obviously tortured soldier I handed over a statement of humanitarian principles to the North Korean government. My so-called coordinator and minder at that time who was made responsible for not preventing my activities was exchanged. I never saw him and his family again.

My behavior offended the leaders of the workers party and I was forbidden to go to the hospitals anymore, my car was sabotaged and finally I was forced to leave the country. As promised to the North Korean authorities I went directly to Seoul instead of going home to Germany and spoke to the international journalists there. In the following months I also interviewed several hundreds North Korean defectors in Seoul, at the Chinese-North Korean border and in several other places where they are hiding themselves in order to learn more about the cruel reality in their home country.

All the former prisoners of the concentration-camps were talking about mass-execution, torture, rape, murder, baby-killing and other crimes against humanity because they were punished for any “antistate criminal acts”.

Working closely with the media the international community has to put pressure on the North Korean regime to open up toward the outside world and save the ordinary citizens lives. To improve human rights in North Korea the world has to speak out against the current regime.

The regime of Kim Jong-IL is committing crimes against humanity, they are using food as a weapon against their own people. Kim Jong-IL is responsible for genocide, North Korea is a real terror state with terror against his own people and therefore the leadership of this country has to face the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

As a German born after the war I know too well the guilt of my grandparents' generation for remaining silent while the Nazis were committing indescribable crimes. I felt it my duty as a human being, particularly as a German to expose the crimes and tyranny of the North Korean regime.

And as a German I know about the impact of refugees who are fleeing the country. Like in former East Germany where it started with several dozen refugees in the West German Embassy in Prague it will lead to the final collapse of the system.

After visiting the United States, Japan and Europe I will subsequently continue all over the world for the express purpose of exposing the tyranny and criminality of this secret state, with the hope that international pressure will be applied by the world community to bring about a reformation of this depraved "mad place".

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Vollertsen. Before turning to the next witness, let me indicate a matter of congressional procedure. There will be votes on the Floor in the not too distant future. At which point we will have to interrupt proceedings. And so it's possible that when one of you is talking, we will have to interrupt the proceeding and then reconvene at a time somewhat later. I apologize for the circumstance, but several very important issues are before the Floor this afternoon.

Our next witness is Mr. Kim Sung-min, who is a former captain in the North Korean Army. We have an interpreter, Mr. Young Lim, who will assist him, if needed, and the other witnesses if needed. Mr. Kim, please proceed as you see fit.

STATEMENT OF KIM SUNG MIN, DEFECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS' VOLUNTEER GROUP, COMMITTEE TO HELP NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

Mr. KIM. Thank you, Chairman. I wish to thank you first and I understand I am here to talk about the human rights issues in North Korea. And although I deeply thank you for your invitation, I am saddened that I am not at the Congress or National Assembly of my own country, the Republic of Korea, but rather in the United States Congress.

I wish to talk you and your Committee based on my own experience on the problems of human rights and the problems of North Korean refugees in China. I came to South Korea in 1999. And in the beginning of my life in South Korea, I used to call the dear leader's name only "Kim Jong-Il" said such and such. Then the people around me, including the South Koreans, were correcting me, reprimanding me that I was not using the honors such as "Dear Leader Kim Jong-Il."

Since then, a year and a half has past, and at present I still am to say Kim Jong-Il says so. Kim Jong-Il did such and such. Now I'm corrected not having called him Defense Commissioner Kim Jong-Il.

The one I know, Kim Jong-Il, is the person responsible who murdered more than 1 million people of my home—my country. I also served in the North Korean Army. He is also responsible for having soldiers die of starvation and malnourishment. And he should be the person responsible.

The one I know, Kim Jong-Il, is the one who orders 23 million North Koreans to do what he wants them to do and what his regime wants them to do. Again, considering South Korea, the one I know, Kim Jong-Il, is the one who caused 70 million—the entire Korean people—to be used for his own personal benefit.

Sometimes it's said that Kim Jong-Il is ignorant of the outside world. He does not pay attention to what's happening other than in his own country, but that is not true. He is listening and watching everything that's taking place. I'm sure he is watching and listening right now to what's going on right here.

Having said that, I wish to report to you the misery, the tragedy the Korean people are suffering with in North Korea today. Outside North Korea, they say North Korean soldiers are well off, living well, well fed; but that is not so. I served in the North Korean Army for 16 years. In 1992 and 1993 I saw 12 fellow soldiers dying of malnourishment.

North Korean soldiers get rations with salt and rice, and due to eating only salt and rice, they would naturally be malnourished. In 1991, North Koreans were given daily rations of rice and some other mixed grains and the rest was ordered to be provided by self-sufficiency. Authorities of the Army will feed the soldiers other than the ration of salt and rice and some other mixed grains.

On April 15th and February 15th, two national celebration days, for example, Kim Il-Sung's birthday and Kim Jong-Il's birthday, soldiers were given one kilogram of pork, but it acted as if it poisoned the malnourished person's empty stomach. The oil went inside and the soldiers would have diarrhea, and diarrhea would not stop. So they would die. In one year I saw 12 soldiers dying with my own eyes, and felt so sad and miserable.

Mr. LEACH. If I could interrupt. I apologize to you, Mr. Kim. But the buzzers and the lights you see in the clock indicate that there is a vote on the Floor. And what I would like to do is to interrupt your testimony. It is extremely moving and extremely important. But what we will do is interrupt it for this time and then return and then we'll come back to you, Mr. Kim, to finish your testimony before turning to the other witnesses.

So I would like to adjourn this meeting, pending the vote, and indicate that we probably won't reconvene until about 20 minutes after 1 o'clock. So you're free to visit in the halls or whatever you may need to do during that time period. The Committee is in recess until 1:20 p.m.

[Recess.]

Mr. LEACH. The Subcommittee will reconvene. And when we broke, Mr. Kim was in the middle of very compelling testimony. And I apologize to him for this interruption. But please, if you would proceed as he sees fit.

Mr. KIM. Thank you, Chairman, for being kind to me and to us. While I was in the Army, I've seen people dying of starvation inside the Army and outside the Army in the neighborhoods. And according to the labor party secretary, Hwang Jang Yop, he estimated those died of starvation to be 1.5 million and 2 million.

In order to escape death by starvation, one would flee North Korea. We call them escapees or refugees into China. The number of those refugees, according to the South Korean government, is 40 to 45,000. But Kim Song Chul, who leads a national movement for the refugees, his estimate is 200,000.

Chairman, with respect, I will not talk anymore on the inhuman realities of North Korea or the tragedies experienced by the North Korean refugees in China.

Though I wish to report to you that, not the South Korean government, but the people in South Korea and the Korean-Americans, mainly Christians in New York and Washington, DC, are trying to hard to help North Korean refugees in China. As of April 2002, these Korean-American christians are collecting signatures to

have those North Korean refugees in China acquire status as international refugees. And I'm told that the number of signatures has reached 11,700,000. We also have the problem of China. They are challenging human conscience and the dignity of human beings, their humanity. But as long as we all are trying hard together such a barrier will be disassembled and the problem of human rights will be solved. I thank you so very much, Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kim follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KIM SUNG MIN, DEFECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS' VOLUNTEER GROUP, COMMITTEE TO HELP NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

On October 1st, 1995, I left my hometown, where I was born and had spent more than 30 years, with happy and sorrowful memories. Yes, it was and still is my hometown. But when I was leaving, there was no one shedding tears or saying a prayer or two for the uncertain future ahead of me. There was not even a hint of sadness in that moment of separation. Having lost both parents in my early teens, my hometown meant nothing to me but hunger, loneliness and despair.

Since I was fourteen, I drifted from one 'home' to another learning how to cope with hunger and to read others' faces trying to become a good boy. In 1978, as a seventeen-year-old boy, I was conscripted into the North Korean People's Army, Kim Jong Il's most favored organization, for 10 years and one month. During all those years, I was a well-trained war machine who was ready to do whatever was needed under the banner of "Reunify the country with the red force."

Upon completion of military service in 1988, I was admitted to the Kim Hyung Jik College of Education. When I graduated from the college four years later, I got a letter of appointment from the authorities, which made me an officer of the People's Army. For a man who had spent a total of 15 years in a military uniform, the military spirit naturally became the supreme value of life. Nothing else could match that.

Then, a thunderous news hit me one day. It was the death of 'our great leader' Kim Il Sung, who had been to me, like to everyone else in North Korea, the Immortal Sun. His death was followed by bizarre and appalling rumors, such as hungry people killing each other to eat their flesh. As if to confirm those rumors, people often saw corpses of elderly people and children in dark corners of city streets or remote mountain trails. Every station and every street market began to be crowded with elderly people and children who were either abandoned or ran away for lack of food.

Listening to their horror stories, I could not help but ask myself what I was doing as a member of the People's Army whose duty should be to protect the people from all evil forces. I concluded from the terrible experiences that the politics of the Republic had nothing to do with the welfare and happiness of its people and that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was born only to kill democracy on this land. This absurd society, where one segment was busy with talks about Kim Jong Il's succession as if preparing a coronation while people in other segments were starving, made me really sick. The moment of choice came for me, and I chose freedom and a better life.

One day I crossed the Tumen River, the border waterway between China and North Korea. As I was a runaway military officer on the active list, getting caught meant instant execution, and every step I took on that foreign soil was crucial to saving my life. My only hope was to go to South Korea somehow, but I didn't know how. For a North Korean refugee, finding things to eat is a major daily concern; no passage was open to that land of hope and safety.

Finally, I arrived at the destination of my long journey, the Korean embassy in China. However, nothing was further away from my expectation than their reception. "Go away quickly and go back! What if the Chinese police catch you? We have no way to handle cases like yours." Without knowing it, I was clenching my fists and my teeth, and a streak of blood was running from my mouth. They didn't seem to have the slightest idea about what North Korean refugees in China like me were going through.

By mentioning the Chinese police and this and that excuse, they succeeded in driving me away. I spat and spat at them, at their inhumanity even to their brothers. Frustrating though it was, I had no choice but to continue my personal exodus to the land of freedom and safety. I somehow managed to sneak to the port city of Dalian and was lucky to find a Korean merchant ship. As night fell, I proceeded

to the ship. But then, a group of Chinese armed police rushed out of the darkness and handcuffed me without asking questions.

I was escorted to the police station in Dalian's port, and put in jail. Two days later, on February 24th, I was transferred to the City of Dalian's prison, where on the way I was escorted by three Chinese officials, including the chief of the External Affairs Department of the city's Public Security Bureau. I had to stay in that cell with Chinese petty criminals for about forty days, while they conducted an investigation and waited for the decision from higher authorities. Anyway, that is what I was told. I pleaded with them whenever I found the opportunity, often with tears, not to send me back to North Korea, saying, "I would rather stay here in prison all my life than go back and be executed." It was useless. Soon I was transferred to Tumen, under the escort of five armed guards.

The fact that Tumen is a border town near North Korea was good enough to drive me into a state of terror. Looking at those who took me in, I realized instantly that they were specialists in dealing with refugees from North Korea, like me. The first thing they told me to do was to take off all my clothes to search for something only they knew. I had to give them all I had, my body and clothes, so they could do their "search," trembling with shame and fear. Then, they roughly pushed me to a wall, and began taking pictures of my front, my back, my sides and every part of me. Abyssmal shame and terror overpowered me, and I became an animal that was half dead.

After the search, they dragged me further inside through 2 sets of iron doors, and put me into a tiny prison cell, which I shared with seven of my countrymen who had also escaped from North Korea for a variety of reasons. The room had neither windows nor a ventilation system. The heavy iron door I had just passed through was the only path to the outside world. I wondered if I would die from lack of oxygen, even though my cellmates assured me that no one had died because of that, at least until then. In the room there was a spy camera at one corner of the ceiling, a toilet pot like a toy, and several pieces of dirty, ragged blankets and pillows.

This is one of the detention camps located at the border between China and North Korea, which China built to put away the North Korean refugees they catch. The detention camp at Tumen, which is managed by special agents of the Chinese Security Bureau (similar to the U.S. CIA), Jilin Province, is completely segregated from the outside world by high walls and barbed wire. Even within the camp building, every movement by inmates is closely monitored and controlled by the three iron doors and one prison gate as well as the well-trained guards.

What is waiting for these refugees is forced repatriation to North Korea, a situation they want to avoid at any cost. To prevent refugees from taking any drastic action, camp officials often cajole them by saying that they might send them to the so-called "Farm for Brainwashing through Labor" in China rather than send them back to North Korea if the refugees cooperate with them by adhering to the camp regulations. That is why inmates try to survive in the camp.

One should have been smart enough to realize that what they were saying were complete lies, and taken certain resolute measures. But in such an unusual situation, people often make the wrong decision, and so did I. I decided to stay calm and cooperate with them, hoping to be transferred some day to the farm they talked about. I gave honest answers to their questions about when and where I had been in China, and whom I met and for what reason, etc., etc. Their interrogation lasted for days, often interrupted because they wanted to check if I was giving correct answers.

Then, one day I was told to come out to the prison yard, where two soldiers were waiting for my arrival. They dashed over to me, handcuffed me, and pushed me into a van. The van was already on the Tumen Bridge even before I knew what was going on. It takes only five minutes to the Tumen Bridge by van from the camp. By the time I realized what was happening to me, I was right there in North Korea, the last place I wanted to be on earth.

I was handed over to a group of North Korean soldiers that took part in the ritual of changing handcuffs, from Chinese to North Korean state property. As if well prepared for my arrival, the North Korean soldiers dragged me to Kim Il Sung's Tower of Immortality, a monument erected at a place directly opposite the Domun (Tumen) Customs House. There, a man who said he was the director of Onseong-gun Office of the National Defense Agency, the powerful military organization that could be compared to the CIA of the U.S., introduced me to a crowd of civilians who were gathered around the tower for my arrival, using the term "bandong-bunja (reactionary)," a title that I had become so familiar with.

He told the crowd to look at me closely to see what a traitor looked like, and had me walk among them. Angry shouts of "you, dirty rat," "you, betrayer," and "die, you turncoat" were shouted at me. Some spat in my face, and some threw their

shoes at me. Then, I was hit by a stone on my forehead, and heard loud cheers coming from the crowd. The cheering made these people even more excited, and soon my face and head became covered with blood from the stones hitting me. I kept walking, and cursed not them, my poor countrymen, but myself, for the stupidity of having not killed myself in front of the Korean Embassy or while in the detention camp in Tumen. After the ritual, I was escorted to the Onseong-gun Office of the National Defense Agency.

I have heard that there are talks about North Korean refugees going on at the United Nations, whether the refugees should be treated as political refugees or illegal immigrants who left their country just for economic reasons. One thing I can say to those who are involved in the debate is that in North Korea all North Koreans who escaped their country with reasons similar to mine are treated as political offenders. My case clearly shows this. As soon as I was taken into the building of the Onseong-gun's NDA, they started to 'interrogate' me under the charge of high treason. It was an interrogation session conducted more by physical abuse than by words.

They didn't ask me who I was, where I lived, what I did at home and abroad and why I committed such a horrible crime of betraying my own country. It wasn't important to them, or perhaps they already knew all about me and others who were in the same situation. They broke my fingers, ballooned my face, and pickled my whole body in dark blood. After going through the hell of the "preliminary interrogation" that seemed to last forever, I was then put in a prison cell where lice and fleas were waiting for me. Every minute I prayed to God to put an end to my suffering, to take my life.

After eight days of imprisonment in the Onseong-gun Office of the NDA, I was put on a train to Pyongyang, escorted by armed guards from the Headquarters of the NDA. "You too are a poor little thing," said the military officer leading the guards, in response to my question of where we were going. "Don't you know? What do you think a thing like you deserves but execution by a firing squad? Your colleagues are waiting for you, and there will be a public trial for you five days from now," he added.

Now was the time to get myself killed, I thought. I couldn't bear the thought of being shot dead as a traitor to the Republic in front of the soldiers I had once led as their captain. I made the decision to jump off the train, even if to be killed by the train wheels. Passing by Sinseongchon Station near Pyongyang, I jumped off the running train, and found that I once again had become a free man instead of a dead man. I ran and ran and ran toward the north. On April 3rd, I crossed the Tumen River again to re-start life as an illegal immigrant, which would last for nearly four years. Thanks to God, my horror story suddenly took a turn for the best on February 9th, 1999, when I was admitted to the country where I always wanted to be, the Republic of Korea, which was, and still is, a true Republic to me.

Now, as a man who survived all kinds of inhuman conditions through the valley of the shadow of death and now living in a free society, I have something to tell the conscience of mankind. What I have to say is, of course, about the North Korean refugees in China, a group of people, including children and women, who are leading among the most tragic of lives in the world today. No one exactly knows how many there are. The suggested figures among humanitarian groups or concerned government officials vary widely from none to thousands or even to millions.

The truth is that a great number of these refugees are being caught, treated inhumanely and repatriated by force back to "their own country" to be drowned, tortured, maimed, hanged, or shot to death. Pretending not to have seen anything, we have encouraged those who inflict indescribable pain, both mental and physical, on these helpless human beings. It is a great shame for both Korea and the world. I plead particularly with people in the South to pay closer attention to the horrific situation which their brothers and sisters are subjected to. It cannot be a matter just for the Chinese and North Korean governments. It is a matter to be dealt with by the South Korean government from a historical perspective as well as a matter over which the future generations of reunified Korea will ponder again and again.

It is too cruel, or too foolish, for parents to haggle with doctors over hospital fees when there is a loving baby dying in an emergency room. There certainly are laws and procedures to be followed in international affairs, but I believe that the universal law of human rights should come first. We should do everything to make this clear for the reactionary governments of China and North Korea until they give up their policies of killing innocent people. The tragedy of North Korean refugees should end right now.

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Kim. Ms. Lee?

**STATEMENT OF SUN-OK LEE, FORMER PRISON AND CAMP
SURVIVOR**

Ms. LEE. Chairman Leach, my name is Lee Sun-Ok, who escaped North Korea in search of freedom into South Korea with my son, Choi Dong Chul. Today, I have an opportunity to provide testimony to your Committee, and I thank you very much for such an opportunity.

Before I report to you of my own personal experiences, I wish to cover in summary to help your understanding of the current status of human rights violations in North Korea.

If I describe in one word the status of North Korean human rights, the best concept for Westerners would be that such thing does not exist. The people of North Korea do not even have the term "human rights." And even if they did, they wouldn't know the basis of human rights. They do not understand human rights.

Kim Jong-Il's regime is neither socialism nor communism. Its political system is Kim Jong-Il's own one person, one party political system. In order to maintain his dictatorial regime, he has established numerous political prisons and camps. When the international organizations demand those political prisoners to be freed from those camps and prisons, North Korea's answer is provided in a lie that there are no political prisons or camps.

There are political prison camps in 12 different regions in North Korea. They euphemistically call these political prisons or camps to be reform institutes or reform facilities. And in one facility, one institute, there could be from 6,000 prisoners up to 10,000 prisoners. The biggest one would even have 30,000. The dictatorial regime of Kim Jong-Il unconditionally imprisons those who are critical of his dictatorship. Those who are in the political prisons or the reform institutes number nearly 200,000.

Those who are held at the reform institute or facility are deprived of even the very basic rights as a human being. And they are excluded from demographic statistics in North Korea. So they could be called inhuman human beings. Those who are held in the reform institute or the facility are not free to even talk to each other. And in the case of women, they are prohibited to give birth to babies.

In North Korea, even today, guilt by association is applied and it's a crime. If one member of the family is determined to be put into reform institute, the entire family has to follow him or her to the reform institute. That applied to myself also. Once I was taken to the reform institute, my family, including my husband and son, were expelled from the positions they were holding and put into the camp for forced labor.

Right now, currently, horrible things are taking place in North Korean reform institutes or political prisons and camps unimaginable by the people in the West. In North Korea there is an annual pre-plan for how many people have to be taken into those political prisons and camps. In order to achieve such a quota, innocent people are tortured to make false confessions.

In my case, also, I suffered. I was an innocent person, but I had to suffer 14 months in a secret underground torture room. At that time, I was working as a head of a local material supply center. And my crime was that as the person in charge I was neglectful

of properly dispensing the material under my charge. But Kim Jong-Il was responsible and he was unable to give me the material for my distribution for the local residents.

Suffering these various types of tortures, I lost left side teeth, eight of them. And also on the left side of my face, I still have the facial paralysis as the after effect of the torture.

In the reform institute in Kaecheon where I was held, there were 200 women housewives as prisoners. In the case of these women, if any is pregnant, the baby would be killed. If a baby's mom was a political criminal, inside her the baby is the same political criminal. So the seed of a political criminal should not be allowed to be born. That's why the baby was killed inside of her.

I have seen the true scenes of killing babies inside and those babies could be 7-, 8-, 9-months-old. Despite all this, if a baby was strong enough to live on, I saw a medical officer stepping on the baby's neck with his boots once he or she was born. If the mom would cry for help to save her child, it was an expression of dissatisfaction against the party. So such a woman would be dragged out of the building and put to public execution by firing squad.

The North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-Il, is not interested in acquiring any foodstuffs for the people. But he is busy producing ammunition on a huge scale, too much ammunition, that will be used to kill his own people.

At this public execution by firing squad of a weak woman, she was tied to a iron post. There were six in the firing squad and each had three rounds of ammunition, firing at the weak woman's chest. So she was shot by 18 rounds in her chest. While the mom was watching, the baby was killed, taken out, put in a bucket, and taken to the laboratory for experimentation.

I have seen so many people put to death at Kaecheon during my 7 years in the reform institute. Things that should not be done by a human being are being done.

Not a laboratory rat, but a live human body is being used for experimentation.

The worst kind of political criminal in North Korea is considered to be one who believes in God or Heaven rather than the great leader god of North Korea. I have seen hundreds who suffered pain all their lives and were finally killed at the Kaecheon reform institute only because they said they believed in God.

The family members of those were imprisoned, even a 3-year old granddaughter or grandson, only because their grandfather was a Christian. They were all put in together in the family camp. In 1990 I had an opportunity to go and see Kaecheon political camp, which was next to where I was at, the Kaecheon reform institute. That's where I saw the children isolated in their own children's camp and mothers are isolated away from their children in mothers' camp.

Those children who stayed there for more than 10 years, for example, would not be able to recognize their mother's face. I have spent 7 years in a political reform institute and I have seen horrors and tragedies of the worst kind. And I wish to ask the international community if such a regime in North Korea could ever be forgivable?

In my case, my loving husband and son, only because they were members of my family, had to live so long in such a painful place. I believe the international community, including the Republic of Korea, is being cheated by the Kim Jong-Il regime. As I sit in front of you to provide testimony, I'm full of honor and a sense of duty that I should continue on sitting here and work until the day the North Korean political system crumbles down and, thanks to the international community's public opinion, those horrible political prisons and camps are disestablished.

I only wish for all of us who are sitting here to imagine that each and every member of our family is suffering in that political prison. And with such a consistent and long-lasting interest I hope the North Korean people will be helped. The population of 23 million people in North Korea is only a pawn held by Kim Jong-Il.

In the 1980s North Korea was not open to the rest of the world or to the international community, but it is open because Kim Jong-Il is asking for economic and food aid. He is asking for help. North Korea's Kim Jong-Il comments on South Korea's Sunshine policy are:

"South Korea's Sunshine policy was successful to make South Koreans take off their jacket, but not the coat I'm wearing."

I have lived through almost 50 years in North Korea with all these pains under such a harsh dictatorship. And I know the system so well, therefore, my disappointment is greater. In talking to North Korea the priority the international community should be set on, to include South Korea, is not dialogue with North Korea. It should be the international community's demand by public opinion that improvement in human rights in North Korea should proceed in order to have any dialogue.

All the support and aid given to North Korea from the international community, including South Korea, was successful in only in the aspect that it prolonged Kim Jong-Il's regime. Since the North Korean regime is having its own people in their own country starved, naturally, there will be many who escape away from home to China, to South Korea, since they couldn't make a living in their own country. And now they are homeless wanderers and starving, asking for food.

A person like me, guilty of having been born in North Korea was forced to leave home, North Korea. Those who left North Korea and escaped to other countries are not taken care of by the international community. I escaped North Korea, went to Beijing and found the South Korean Embassy in Beijing. Holding my son's hand, I entered the South Korean Embassy in Beijing and asked for political asylum.

The South Korean Embassy in Beijing coldly rejected and expelled us out of the facility, myself and my son. This has happened not only to me, but also to many, many people who run away from North Korea. Currently, today, there are these people who do not have their own nation, who are not attended to by the international community, and they are living a beggar's life.

It is high time for the international community, including South Korea, to hold Kim Jong-Il responsible. I do not believe there could be such a ruler who could rule his or her people while unable to

feed them. I believe the one leader who could not be held responsible for his own people should be expelled out of the international community.

Eighty percent of the annual budget of North Korea is used for manufacturing and in the sales of weapons systems for war.

Out of a sense of duty, I wrote a book about the cruel realities taking place in North Korean political prisons and reform institutes. I am with you, Chairman, at the U.S. Congress as a witness to provide testimony for the third time today. I am a Korean but I cannot work for the Korean people—for the human rights of the North Korean people in Korea. Every time I appear before you I am full of a sense of shame.

South Korea is looking the other way as if the problem of human rights in North Korea is a thing happening in a far, far away land. I do recognize and believe in the importance of economic exchange and mutual dialogue. But without any progress in the human rights area, everything else will not succeed, will not prevail.

I wish to ask you in greatest sincerity once again to all who are present here today, I wish to ask you. Perhaps it is out of place to make such a request because it's such a difficult and big request. In order to see any progress in the North Korean human rights violations and North Korean repression of human rights, our efforts should not be a one-time political issue. But I would ask you now to continue on until the day the problem of human rights in North Korea would end.

Chairman, thank you so much for allowing me to talk for a quite lengthy time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUN-OK LEE, FORMER PRISON AND CAMP SURVIVOR

I was a normal gullible North Korean citizen, loyal to Leader and Party, and believed that North Korea was a people's paradise. I was the Director of the Government Supply Office for party cadres for 14 years when I was arrested in 1984 under the false charge of embezzlement of state property. I was subjected to severe torture during a 14-month preliminary investigation until I was forced to admit to the false charges against her. Eventually, I received a term of 13 years in prison at a kangaroo court. I had served 5 years and two months in prison when I was released in 1992 under a surprise amnesty.

During the first six months in the prison, I had worked briefly at all of the factories in the prison before I was finally assigned accounting work due to my background as an accountant. My routine responsibilities included updating prisoners' list by deleting the dead from it and adding new arrivals to it, allocation of meals and work quotas, updating work accomplished, collecting daily work reports, carrying new work instructions to all work sites, and so on.

Thus, I had access to records of numbers of inmates and production plans, etc., and was privileged to daily visit all factories in the prison in both men's and women's sectors. I survived her over five years of ordeal because of the opportunity to walk to all the work sites every day which other prisoners could not and because I had relatively easy work in an office as an accountant with the prison officials.

I surrendered to South Korea in December 1995 with my son Dong-chul Choi. I published a book, *The Bright Eyes of the Tailless Beasts in Seoul* in December 1996 to inform the world of these crimes against humanity by the North Korean government. With the help of a volunteer art student, I has produced the following illustrations to show the world the reality of the North Korean crimes against humanity.

In addition to the detention settlements for political prisoners, there are two or three secret political prisons. Prisoners accused of violating policies of the party are imprisoned here through kangaroo court. I was a prisoner at one of these political prisons.

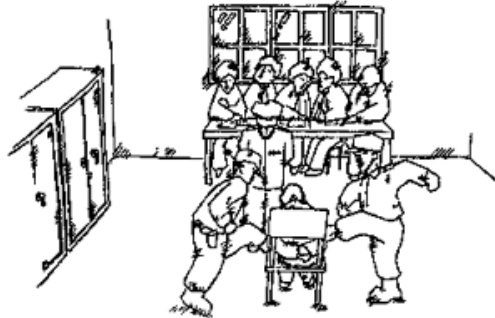
I recalls life in the North Korean prison:

"A prisoner has no right to talk, laugh, sing or look in a mirror. Prisoners must kneel down on the ground and keep their heads down deeply whenever called by a guard, they can say nothing except to answer questions asked. Women prisoners' babies are killed on delivery. Prisoners have to work as slaves for 18 hours daily. Repeated failure to meet the work quotas means a week's time in a punishment cell. A prisoner must give up her human worth. When I was released, some 6,000 prisoners, both men and women, were crying and pleading with me in their hearts to let the outside world know of their suffering. How can I ever forget their eyes, the eyes of the tailless beasts?"

After release, I could have lived peacefully in North Korea and enjoyed my previous status as a senior party member because people all knew that I was innocent. However, I decided to risk my own life to inform the world of the Kim Jung Il's crimes against humanity. I testify that most of the 6,000 prisoners who were there when I arrived in 1987 had quietly perished under the harsh prison conditions by the time I was released in 1992. This shows that about 1,000 prisoners died each year and a fresh supply of new prisoners was obtained each year in order to meet the production quotas! I recall that I was the only prisoner released during the term of my imprisonment. The only exception I can recall is a group of some 250 prisoners, Koreans from Japan. They had arrived there from Yodok detention settlement, I was told, several months before my arrival. On the day of the 30th anniversary of the signing of agreement between North Korea and Japan for returning Korean residents from Japan to North Korea (shortly after her arrival at the prison), they were sent to an unknown location.

North Korean Kangaroo Court

EXPERIENCED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The preliminary trial was for 10:00 am at my former office, where I worked for 17 years as a loyal party member. I asked for my husband before entering the court. "Your husband is not here. Don't ever try to meet anybody else, understand?" was the reply. Don't I even get to see my husband on the day of my trial?

I met my lawyer for the first time in the courtroom. The court consisted of a judge, prosecutor, lawyer and a two-member "jury." My interrogator was there also. The judge made a few remarks about the charges against me and asked me if I accepted the charge.

I had promised the interrogators earlier that I would accept the charge, but I simply could not control myself at that moment. "Your Honor, I have neither embezzled government property nor violated any of the party policy. Never, never! I am innocent. Please allow me a fair investigation." The two guards at my sides shouted, "You must be crazy!" and started to kick me in the knees. At that moment, the judge declared the preliminary trial closed. The trial lasted less than 15 minutes!

It was very cold on November 9, 1987, my trial day. In the morning, the interrogators repeated their warning, "You better be careful what you say in court or your husband and son will be in serious trouble. Remember that!" (I did not know that my husband, in fact, had already been exiled internally!) However, I was firmly determined to do what I could to prove my innocence to the party officials and my husband. I was still so naive and excited by the idea of meeting my husband and telling him loudly, in the court room, all about my sufferings.

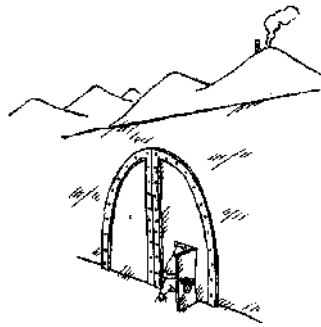
After the preliminary trial which lasted less than 15 minutes, I was detained at the police cell for the formal trial until five o'clock in the afternoon. I was given no water and food. The interrogators persistently harassed me with the same threat,

“What about your husband and son? If you accept the charge in court, they will be safe. Otherwise, you know what’s going to happen to them.”

At court in the afternoon, I had to say yes when the judge asked me, “Do you accept the charges against you?” There was no evidence produced nor any witnesses against me. The judge made no reference to the absence of evidence and witnesses and committed me to a 13-year imprisonment in violation of the government commercial policy and state property embezzlement. The lawyer remained silent throughout the entire court proceeding. The mere formality to send me to prison was thus over under the pretext of a trial.

Underground Emergency Execution Chamber

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, A FORMER FEMALE PRISONER



Near the prison gate, there is a huge iron gate that leads to the underground tunnels. Guards often remind the prisoners that their lives are considered disposable and that they can be collectively annihilated at any time in the underground tunnels. The tunnels, of course, can be blasted at any time, leaving no traces of massacre. It is said that the underground space is so large that it can accommodate several thousand prisoners at one time. The male prisoners' sector has a huge underground factory for the production of ammunition and weapons. I have never been to the underground weapon factory myself but I have frequently heard prison officials talking about it. I do not know whether the underground tunnels in the women's sector are connected to the men's underground factory.

I often saw fumes coming from a distant chimney atop a nearby hill. I was told that the chimney is one of the ventilators of the underground tunnels.

Meals for Prisoners

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON

Salt soup

100 grams of broken corn, full meal

80 grams of broken corn, reduced for punishment

60 grams of broken corn, reduced for punishment

Prisoners' Sleeping Conditions

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



Some eighty to ninety prisoners sleep in a flea-infested chamber about six meters long by five meters wide (about 19 feet by 16 feet). Some eighty percent of the prisoners are housewives. The prison chamber is so congested that sleeping there is itself a torture. Prisoners sleep on the floor, squeezed together, head and feet alternating. So, prisoners sleep with the stinking feet of other prisoners right under their nose. They roll up their clothes for pillows.

During the winter, prisoners share body heat against the cold wind coming under the floor. However, during the summer, it is so stuffy with the sweat and stink of the prisoners that they prefer sleeping at the work site even though it means more work.

Two prisoners must stand on night duty for one-hour shifts. The following morning, prisoners on night duty must report to the prison authorities all the details of their duty including the sleep talking of other prisoners. They get their duty hour extended if caught sleeping.

Evening Roll Call

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The prisoners are divided into units and teams and must always act collectively by group under the slogan, "All Actions by Unit and Team!" Prisoners get up, line up for roll call, proceed to work, take meals, go to the toilet, finish work and go to bed collectively and at the mercy of the prison authorities.

At the end of the day's grueling work, the prisoners are so tired and exhausted that many of them experience physical problems returning to the prison chamber promptly. This means that the other prisoners in the same unit have to wait and sleep less. Every night, it is a hellish experience that lasts for an hour or even longer: the calling of prisoners for others, or repeated roll calls, and prisoners desperate to go to sleep as soon as possible.

The Kaechon Women's Prison comprises the following eleven work units: miscellaneous factory, export factory, shoe-making factory, leather/rubber factory, clothing factory, fabric-cutting factory, work preparation unit, maintenance unit, drop-out punishment unit, farm unit and kitchen unit.

The prisoners must always keep their heads down at work and avoid other movement unnecessary for work. More than half of the female prisoners have lumps on their head or shoulders and are hunchbacks or crippled. Most female prisoners working in the shoe factory are baldheaded.

The entire unit is responsible for the mistakes of any one prisoner in the team. As a result, newcomers are not welcome because the entire unit will have to work more and go to bed later because of the newcomer's failure to move and work fast enough.

Prisoners and Prison Guards

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



At all the factories, there are glass boxes for prison guards to sit in while supervising prisoners at work. The glass walls enable them to watch the prisoners at work while avoiding their terrible stench. In addition, the prison guards always wear masks and keep some distance from the prisoners because of the bad smell.

As standard practice, a prisoner must run to the official and sit down on her knees with her head down whenever she is called. The prisoner can only answer the questions asked and cannot say anything else. Prisoners are very often kicked in the face or breast for slow answers or movement. The prisoners are severely punished for raising their heads or stretching their bodies.

Punishment Cells, Chambers of Death

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The punishment cell is one of the most dreaded punishments for all prisoners. The cells are usually 60 cm wide and 110 cm high. Therefore, the prisoners have no room to stand up, stretch their legs or lie down. They cannot even lean against the walls because they are too jagged. There are twenty such cells for female prisoners and 58 cells for male prisoners. They are usually detained for seven to ten days as punishment for certain offenses, such as leaving an oily mark on clothes, failing to memorize the president's New Year message or repeated failure to meet work quotas.

When the prisoners are released from the cells, their legs are badly bent, with frostbite in the winter, and so they can hardly walk. Many victims are permanently crippled from the lack of adequate exercise and eventually died as a result of the work resumed immediately after the release. The prisoners call the punishment cell "Chilsong Chamber," meaning a black angel's chamber of death.

In November 1989, I was detained in the punishment cell for a week for attempting to cover-up a faulty piece of shirt made by a 20 yearold girl. The young girl was sent to the torture chamber and never seen again. Among other things, the freezing cold wind from the toilet hole made the experience extremely painful. During the summer, the prisoners struggle to brush thousands of maggots back into the toilet hole.

After being released, I had problems walking for 15 days but I was able to recover because my job gave me the needed opportunity to walk to all corners of the prison with work instructions.

They say it is a day of great fortune if a prisoner finds a rat creeping up from the bottom of the toilet hole. The prisoners catch it with their bare hands and de-

your it raw, as rats are the only source of meat in the prison. They say the wonderful taste of a raw rat is unforgettable. If they are caught eating a rat, however, the punishment is extended. So they have to be very careful when catching and eating a rat.

Prisoners Can Use Communal Toilets Only Twice a Day

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



There is one collective toilet, one meter wide and two meters long, for every 300 prisoners. Five or six prisoners use the toilet together at the same time. The first group leaves work for the toilet with a wooden pass. Then, they return to work with the pass. The next group is then allowed to visit the toilet collectively with the pass. In this way, the prisoners use the toilet only twice a day in group shifts, not when they need to. The prisoners squat on a slope and evacuate onto a sloped floor. There is only one hole at the end of the toilet.

Please note the toilet duty prisoner holding a wooden pass in the above drawing. The prisoner on toilet duty must stay inside the toilet for 17–18 hours a day. They are normally old and crippled women who are not fit to work. They look horrible with faces swollen and yellow from the stench. Some prisoners prefer the job because of the guarantee of a full ration meal, but they normally die within a year.

Prisoners Die After Spending Time in Punishment Cell

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON

Hun-sik Kim was the principal of Pyongyang Light Engineering College. She was sentenced to a 5-year imprisonment for suggesting to the City Education Board that her students' labor responsibility be reduced so that they could spend more time studying.

In prison, she was assigned the work of measuring fabric to produce jackets, which were to be given as gifts to workers outside by the President on his birthday. One time, she miscalculated the imported nylon fabric but immediately corrected the error and no fabric was wasted. However, she was detained in the punishment cell for ten days for "attempting sabotage." She was crippled and partly paralyzed when she was released from the punishment cell. On a very hot summer day in August, the camp doctors burned her bottom with heated stones to see if she could feel pain. Just before she died a few weeks later, she whispered to me, with a twittered tongue and tears in her eyes, "I want to see the blue sky. You know my children are waiting for me."

When she was released from the punishment cell, she needed two prisoners to help her walk to the work site and back. The camp officials claimed that she was feigning injury, and yelled,

"You bitch! Who do you think you are fooling?"

She was kicked around like a soccer ball by the guards but withstood the insults and beatings for about a month. She suffered injuries all over her body while pulling herself up. The sores began to badly suppurate from the infections. She often fainted. She was sent to the sick room but she had to continue her work in the sick room. I was in the same room because I was a paratyphoid patient. One day in August, the camp doctors burned her with heated stones to see if she could feel pain.

I could smell flesh burning, and felt like vomiting and fainting. I remembered what the camp official told me when I first arrived at the camp, "You must give up all your rights as a human!" She never felt any pain when her flesh was burning.

From that day on, she could not control urination and evacuation. I was suffering from a high fever myself but tried my best to caress her burnt wounds with the dirty cloth the doctors gave me. She said to me, with a twittered tongue and tears in her eyes,

"I want to see the blue sky. You know my children are waiting for me."

The next few days, I felt very sick and was unconscious myself, so nobody looked after her as she kept moaning.

A few days later, I came to myself, crawled to her and removed the cloth from her wound. I was shocked to see the wound full of maggots! She died that night. I shouted to a guard through the small door hole,

"Sir, somebody died here."

The reply was,

"So what? You bitch! Don't panic. Wait until morning!"

I found the floor full of maggots the following morning. I had to brush the floor with my bare hands and pick up the maggots into a vinyl bag. I told myself, "You must not die like this. You must survive and tell the whole world about it."

Patients Left to Die under Quarantine

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



I was sequestered in a patient room and left there to die twice, in 1989 and 1992. Paratyphoid spread among the prisoners in May 1989. Many prisoners complained of pain in the abdomen and high fever before fainting. The prison doctor ordered them quarantined in a small room. Some fifty patients were put into a tiny room, so small that patients were placed on top of one another. Those who were conscious reached out their hands for help; those who were unconscious simply remained underneath and died.

Yong-hi, a 19 year-old girl, was brought to the prison with her mother. She called her mom in a feeble voice for an apple and a little water before she died under the other patients. Her mother was working at the miscellaneous factory and did not know that her daughter perished there.

One day, I woke up to hear the voice of Shin-ok Kim, the prisoner/nurse. "How is it that you are still alive? Everybody else died. Get out from there." I was among the few lucky patients who survived the ordeal. When I somehow recovered from the disease, I was sent to report to the medical room. On this occasion, I witnessed the killing of babies in the medical room.

So Much Punishment and Loss of Life to Meet Export Deadline

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON

To meet the deadlines for export, the prisoners often worked until one o'clock in the morning or, for many months, the prisoners slept two to four hours at the work site. They ate, worked and slept in the same place. The standard export items all year around were clothing and different kinds of brushes. They were for markets in Europe, Japan and Hong Kong.

On an ad hoc basis, prisoners produced rose decorations of various colors, each prisoner producing 60 pieces an hour or 1,000 pieces a day, for export to France (September 1990 to February, 1991). They produced some 900,000 pieces of bras-

sieres for export to Russia for \$2 a piece (May to November 1988), and countless pieces of sweaters to Japan (February to August, 1991).

There were big water pans for the prisoners to wash their hands clean frequently. Each prisoner was given a piece of white cloth to cover their dirty laps and keep the products clean. The finished products were beautifully packed and shipped for export.

The prisoners often fall asleep while working and wake up when their fingers are injured by the sewing machine. They apply sewing machine oil on the wound and continue to work. They have to hide their bleeding fingers for fear of punishment for sleeping. So much punishment and loss of life for the sake of meeting the export deadline! I was informed that the foreign exchange earned was spent to supply imported television sets and refrigerators for the security and police officers.

Dead Prisoners Buried under Fruit trees

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



Many prisoners died from hard work, poor treatment, and beatings. The dead bodies were often buried under the fruit trees in the prison orchard. The fruits (apples, pears, peaches, and plums) from the Kaechon orchard have earned a reputation for their large size and sweet taste. They are reserved for senior party and police officials.

On one occasion, 150 corpses were rolled up in straw mats and buried under the fruit trees. The families were never informed and the bodies can no longer be identified.

I remember some of the victims who disappeared under the trees. Kwang-ok Cho, a 62-year old housewife from Shinuiju city, who was arrested for trying to obtain a blanket in the black market for her daughter's wedding gift; In-suk Kim, a middle-aged housewife whose husband died in a mine accident and who often cried out in her dreams the names of her three children left behind at home; Dok-sun Kim, a middle-aged housewife from Chongjin city who was terribly worried about her old parents; Sa-won Kim, a housewife from Kosong-kun, whose handicapped husband badly needed her; Jong-shim Lee, a 19 year-old girl. Once, a group of dead prisoners were buried collectively at a location near the chestnut forest outside the prison.

Freezing Torture

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON

One winter night in 1987 when I was under investigation at the Chongjin Police Station, the interrogator yelled, "Bitch! You've been spoiled by the warmth in the interrogation room. I'm gonna teach you a lesson!" He made me sit outside wearing my underclothes only. It was freezing cold outside. I was showered with a bucket of cold water and left on my knees for an hour. It was here where I saw other prisoners for the first time. There were some ten prisoners on their knees before me on the ground looking like grotesque boulders. The freezing torture was repeated every night throughout the winter. Six prisoners died from this torture.

There were some ten prisoners on their knees before me on the ground. I was told to sit in the front. I walked through the other prisoners to the front. It was so cold that the guard went right back into the office. I heard a low voice, "Hey, Comrade Soon-ok, it's me here!" It was Younghwan Choi, the Supply Manager of Hweryung

District! Soon, I was able to recognize the familiar faces of five former colleagues. They had all been arrested under the same false charges that I was. They all realized that if they died from the torture, they would be perishing under false charges. So they all displayed strong will power to overcome the torture and survive.

However, I witnessed a total of 6 prisoners die from this freezing torture during the winter. The cold was very painful on my hands, legs and ears for the first 20 to 30 minutes. But after that, I felt nothing at all. When we were told after one hour to get up, we were literally frozen and could not stand up. We all fell several times before we somehow managed to rise and stumble back into our cold cells.

Soon, I had large swollen ears. My feet were so swollen that I could not put on my shoes. Water was running from the sores in my swollen legs. When I finally left the interrogation center and arrived at the prison, a prison official told me to apply pine resin from the shoe-making factory. The resin melted all my flesh and I could see some of the bones in my feet. However, because of the resin, fresh flesh began to cover the bones and, after six months, I had normal feet again. I cannot remember when my swollen ears recovered.

Water Torture

EXPERIENCED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



One day in early March 1997, I was taken into a torture chamber that I had never been in before. I saw a big kettle on a small table and a low wooden table with straps, about 20 centimeters high. By surprise, one of the two interrogators tripped me with his leg. They strapped me on to the table and forced the kettle spout into my mouth. The spout was made so that it forced my throat wide open and I could not control the water running into my body. Close to suffocation, I had to breathe through my nose. My mouth was full of water and it overflowed from my nose. As I began to faint from the pain and suffocation, I could not see anything but felt sort of afloat in the air. I had been through all kinds of torture, such as whippings, beatings with rubber bands or hard sticks, or hand twisting with wooden sticks between my ten fingers, but this was worse.

I do not remember how long it lasted but when I woke up I felt two interrogators jumping on a board which was laid on my swollen stomach to force water back out of my body. I suddenly vomited and kept vomiting with terrible pain.

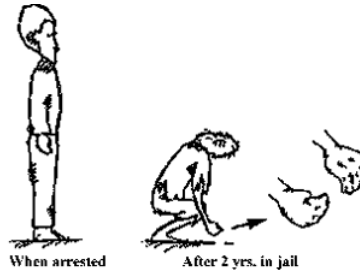
I had no idea how much water ran into my body but I felt like the cells in my body were full of water and water was running out of my body through my mouth, nose, anus and vagina.

I faintly heard somebody saying, "Why doesn't this bitch wake up. Did she die?" I could not get up so I was dragged to my cell that day. From that day on, I suffered from high fever and often fainted. My whole body was so swollen that I could not open my eyes. I could only urinate a few drops of milk-like liquid with blood and felt a severe pain in my bladder. I was able to get up and walk again in about two week's time.

I can not explain how I could have survived such an ordeal. I would have died if that had happened to me in my ordinary life. I must have developed a mysterious super power to sustain myself under an emergency situation.

School Principal, a Torture Victim

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



In 1987, a school principal in Chongjin city found two female teachers murdered the previous night in the night duty chamber of the school. He immediately reported the murders to the police. When the police made little progress in the investigation, they arrested him for murder. He was subject to all kinds of severe torture for two years and forced into confessing the murder.

When I saw him in the police jail, both his ears were gone with only ear holes in their place. I have no idea how it happened but his fingers were cut short and clustered together. He was badly crippled, one leg shorter than the other, and unable to walk. His mouth was slanted and he could not control his lips, which made it very difficult to understand what he said. He was a tall and handsome person before he was arrested but became as short as a ten year-old boy in the two years in the police jail.

He was the principal of Subok Girls' high school in Chongjin City, North Hamkyong Province. He devoted his entire life to education as a career teacher.

He pleaded innocent throughout the severe tortures. Two years later, two criminals were arrested for robbery and confessed that they had snuck into the school to steal an organ, found two women teachers, and murdered them after an unsuccessful attempt at rape.

Nobody was punished or held responsible for arresting the wrong person. There was no apology. Rather, the provincial police forced him to sign a statement that he would never disclose that he had been tortured. He was completely disabled and received no compensation. He died shortly after his release.

This incident shows how incompetent the normal North Korean police investigators are and, as a result, how they commonly torture innocent victims to extract false confessions.

Prisoners Beaten Cruelly

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



One common form of torture was to tie a prisoner against iron bars, spread-eagle by hands and legs and beat him all over the body with a rubber or cow skin whip. Just the pain from hanging by your body weight makes the ordeal unbearable. From the beatings, the skin becomes torn all over, blood splashes and the prisoners begin to feel that their skin isn't human any more. When a prisoner is released from the iron bar, his whole body is so swollen that he cannot bend his back or knees. The prisoner must evacuate and urinate standing.

In the Nongpo Police Detention Center, there were three torture chambers and all kinds of torture were routinely practiced on inmates. I was 39 years old at that time. They subjected me to all kinds of torture there.

Once I resisted when they tried to undress me. One of the torturers punched me in my face so hard that I fainted to the floor. Sometime later, I woke up to find my mouth full of something. They were my broken teeth. Obviously, I bled terribly because the floor was full of my blood. My face was so badly swollen that I could hardly open my eyes. I spit out the broken teeth only after holding up my lips with my fingers. Four teeth from the upper jaw were gone. I began to feel terrible pain in my other teeth. Usually, I was taken to the torture chamber at five o'clock in the morning and remained there until midnight.

Tearing Off the Ears of a Prisoner

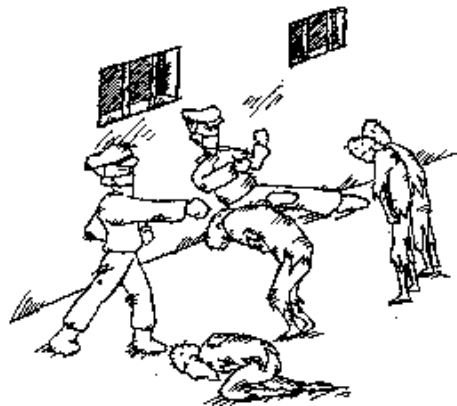
WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The Comptroller of the Seamen's Club of Chongjin City was an old man, 60 years old. He could no longer withstand the tortures that continued daily. When the investigators tore off one of his ears and began tearing off the other, he decided to please the investigators by claiming to be a big thief—the bigger the better. So, he told them that he stole a locomotive from the city railway station. He acquired the nickname, "locomotive head" from the police investigators and officers.

Prisoners Used for Martial Art Practice

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF POLITICAL PRISON

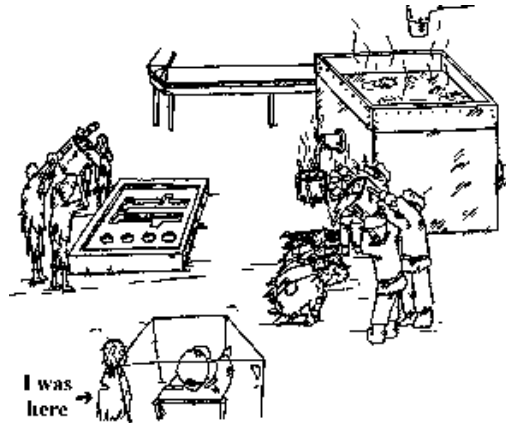


A prisoner in the police jails becomes a different person, skin and bone, from starvation and torture. Male prisoners appear to become undernourished and confused sooner than female prisoners. The jail guards commonly use inmates as martial arts target. They punch and kick prisoners during martial arts practice. The prisoners fall bleeding at the first blow and remain motionless for a while on the cement floor until they are kicked back into the cells.

The guards often bring fish and grill it on their stove, sending a wonderful aroma to the prisoners. This is as painful as any form of torture could be for the starving inmates.

Christians Killed for Refusing to Convert

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The cast-iron factory was considered the most difficult place to work in the entire prison. Christians were usually sent there to work. One Christian working at the cast-iron factory was killed by hanging in a public execution in December 1988 for hiding a friend at his house before he was arrested.

In the spring of 1990, I was carrying a work order to the cast-iron factory in the male prison. Five or six elderly Christians were lined up and forced to deny their Christianity and accept the Juche Ideology of the State. The selected prisoners all remained silent at the repeated command for conversion. The security officers became furious by this and killed them by pouring molten iron on them one by one.

A North Korean Miner's Wife

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



When arrested



After 6 mos. in prison

Jong-ok Kim, about 45, wife of a minor, Hweryong district, was arrested for stealing some 20 liters of corn from a nearby cooperative farm when her children were starving at home in the spring of 1987. During the trial, the judge scolded her for stealing. There was a microphone in front of her but she did not know what it was. She murmured in a very low voice, "Of course, I know stealing is bad. Why would I steal if food ration had continued? How awful this country is." Her complaint reached the judge through the microphone. He was furious and committed her to 15-year hard labor in prison for "criticizing the party policy." She died in the autumn of 1992 of undernourishment and diarrhea, after five years in prison.

She was detained at the cell next to me during the police investigation but we did not see each other at that time because the movement of prisoners was always so strictly controlled that prisoners do not meet each other. The guards in the jails, however, always felt bored when on duty for hours and they would normally ask inmates for all kinds of questions, "Hey you! What's your name? Where are you from? What's the Charge? etc." I overheard their conversations with other inmates and knew about them and, in the same way, the other inmates knew about me even though we did not meet.

One day in prison in 1988, I was carrying work instructions as usual when a prisoner suddenly stopped me by pulling my clothes and whispered to me, "Aren't you the Supply Manager from Onsong District?" Speaking each other was against the prison regulation. I was scared and I moved off without a word. The next day, when there was no prison guard around, I asked her, "How did you know about me?" This is how we met in the prison.

She worked at the leather factory in prison. She had been in prison for about 5 years when, one day in the autumn of 1992, she became too weak to meet her work quota. She received reduced meal for punishment and began to be weaker with less food. She also had serious loose bowels and felt so thirsty but there was no water for prisoners. She was so desperate that she drank the dirty water from the bucket where floor mops had been washed several times. The next day, she dropped to the floor while trying to make a leather bag. She did not move when prison guards kicked her hard. She was dead. They had her dead body wrapped in a straw mat and carried away.

One day in 1994, while I was hiding in China waiting for an opportunity to come to Seoul, I was listening to a mid-night radio broadcast from Seoul which announced arrival in Seoul of two young brothers from North Korea. Their names rang my ears. When I was undergoing intelligence clearance in South Korea, I was able to confirm that the two brothers were indeed the sons of Sung-Ok Choi.

When I was expecting to see her sons in Seoul, the intelligence *officers advised* me not to tell them about their mother's death because the boys are in a very fragile condition emotionally. So, I did not tell them about their mother's death when I first met them. One day in April, 1998, they visited me and told me that they had heard from their relatives in China that their mother had died. Then, I had to confirm the information. They are in South Korea now and visit me regularly.

Typical Scene of Prisoners at Work

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



Officially, the purpose of the prison is to reform the ideology of the prisoners. In reality, however, the purpose of the prison is to exploit slave labor. The prisoners work 1618 hours every day without wages. Cow leather whips are always ready on the walls and women are whipped, kicked, or punched daily for no reason. The prisoners are not allowed to talk, laugh or take a rest. In addition, the prisoners must always keep their heads down and only repeat the same motion for work. As a result, more than half of the women have lumps on their heads or shoulders, are hunchbacks, or are crippled. The camp officers and guards always wear masks because they cannot tolerate the prisoners' stench! The prisoners often urinate or defecate while working because they cannot wait.

The prisoners are allowed to take showers only twice a year. Therefore, all the prisoners naturally stink. The entire prison is full of the awful smell of sweat and the stench of the prisoners enters your lungs the moment you are inside the prison.

The prison officials and guards are there by life appointment. North Korean authorities never transfer them to other posts for fear that their crimes may leak to the outside world.

Have You Heard About the Human Motor?

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The power supply in North Korea was erratic and almost every other day prisoners worked without electricity during the daytime. However, the prison rule was that the daily quota had to be met whether there was electric power or not. So, female prisoners were whipped to keep the motor running manually for the power sewing machines.

There were about 100 sewing machines in the sewing factory, operated by one electric motor. The women were forced, ten in each team, to pull the belt on their shoulders and operate 100 sewing machines, for one hour each. The hardship of the prisoners was beyond description. The production officers mercilessly whipped the prisoners to maintain their productivity.

The female prisoners must meet their work quota to get the standard meal of 100 grams. Each shoe manufactured requires a countless number of small nails to be hammered and so each prisoner has to hammer so many nails every day.

Their fingers are all bent and deformed with hard skin. Three hundred prisoners produce 1,000 pairs of boots daily, working 1618 hours daily to meet the work quota. Often they are forced to work until morning to meet the quota, under collective punishment for the failure of other prisoners to meet the quota.

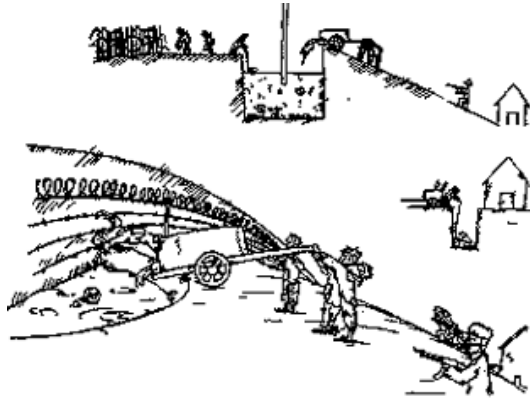
Myong-suk Kim was a very competent and skillful worker and produced the best quality boots for senior officers. The machines were German, but they were imported in the sixties and started to give problems as they aged. One day, she could not meet the quota due to equipment failure. The guards kicked her and shouted, "You swine, you better fix your machine quickly."

When it became clear one day that she could not meet the quota, she drank hydrochloric acid that was kept there for repairing the machine and killed herself. That was in January, 1992.

The prison authorities conducted ideology classes for all prisoners, everyday, to prevent this "ideological corruption" from recurring. It was very tiring to stop work for one hour everyday and stand listening to a nonsense speech before going to bed an hour late.

Women Prisoners Carrying Dung

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The prisoners who are old, slow at work or caught looking at their reflections in a window glass are sent to the “drop-out team” for 3 months, 6 months or one year for punishment. Their main job is to collect dung from the prison toilet tanks and dump it into a large dung pool everyday for supply to the farming teams working at the prison farm outside the wall. Teams of five prisoners must pull a metal tank weighing 800 kilograms.

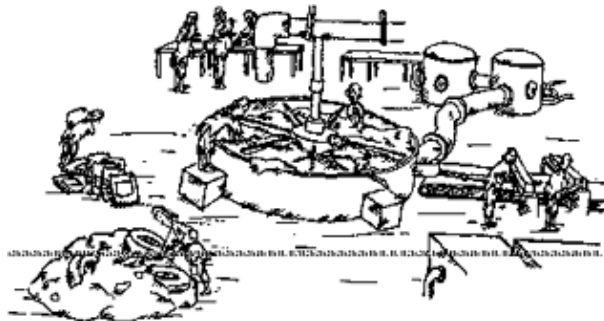
Two women wade knee-deep at the bottom of the toilet arid fill a 20-liter rubber bucket with dung using their bare hands. Three other women pull up the rubber bucket from above and then pour the contents into a transport tank.

Sometimes, the prisoners pulling up the bucket are so weak, they fall into the toilet tank because of the weight of the bucket. When the heavy tank is full, they haul it up to a very large and deep dung pool on the hill.

One rainy day in 1991, a housewife from Pyongyang name Ok-tan Lee had been carrying dung all day long and was ready to transfer the dung to the huge pool. However, the lid of the tank on the wheel somehow got stuck and would not open. When she climbed on the tank to push the door open, she slipped from the rain-wet surface and plunged into the ground dung pool. It was so deep that she disappeared into the dung. A guard some distance away (they always keep their distance because of the stink from the prisoners) shouted, “Stop it! Let her die there unless you want to die the same way yourself!” She was left to drown there in the dung.

Female Prisoners at a Rubber Factory

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



The prison rubber factory was one of the most dangerous and difficult places for women to work. They had to mix used rubber scraps with granular rubber, carry the resulting rubber substance, mix it with rubber glue that came from a big tank

which produced poisonous fumes, and knead it in a big round tank. I remember one female prisoner whose head got covered by the rubber glue while she was cleaning the tall rubber glue tank. She suffocated.

Because air creates foam in the rubber, the whole factory is tightly sealed all year round. In addition, the factory is always full of hot steam for molding shoe soles. Therefore, it's always stuffy and suffocating! The sticky mixture in the tank often overflows and women must push it back into the tank. This was very difficult work for hungry and weak women, and so the sticky mixtures often dragged women into the tank and killed them. So many female prisoners were killed and injured that the prison authorities finally ordered the factory to be operated only by male prisoners in 1989, two years after my arrival at the prison.

Babies Born and Killed

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



When I miraculously survived paratyphoid in 1989, I was sent to the medical room to report. When I arrived at the medical room, I noticed six pregnant women awaiting delivery. I was told to wait for my supervisor to come and take me over. While I was there, three women delivered babies on the cement floor without any blankets. It was horrible to watch the prison doctor kicking the pregnant women with his boots. When a baby was born, the doctor shouted, "Kill it quickly. How can a criminal in the prison expect to have a baby? Kill it." The women covered their faces with their hands and wept. Even though the deliveries were forced by injection, the babies were still alive when born. The prisoner/nurses, with trembling hands, squeezed the babies' necks to kill them. The babies, when killed, were wrapped in a dirty cloth, put into a bucket and taken outside through a backdoor. I was so shocked with that scene that I still see the mothers weeping for their babies in my nightmares. I saw the baby-killing twice while I was in the prison.

When I went back to the medical room for routine duty a few days later, Shin-Ok Kim and Mi-Ok Cho, the prisoner/nurses working in the medical room, were sobbing and one of them told me, "Accountant, we are devils worse than beasts. They say that the dead babies are used to make new medicine for experiments." I was so afraid that I closed her mouth with my finger and said, "I never heard you say this." I hurried to leave from their presence.

I was sent to the same medical room once again when I recovered from pleurisy in 1992. This time, there were some ten pregnant women in the small medical room. They were all injected to induce forced delivery and suffering from pain for many hours. A woman, so undernourished and weak, could not endure the delivery and died during labor. The prisoner/nurse there whispered to me that it is more difficult to deliver a dead baby than a living baby.

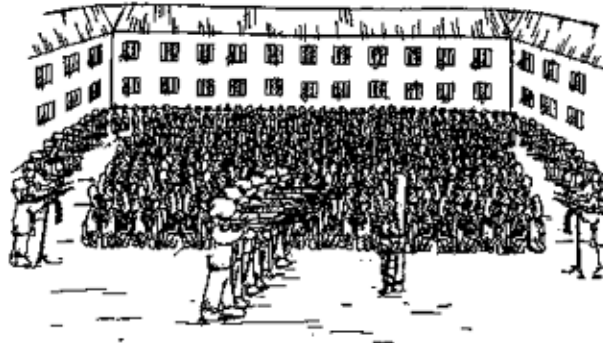
The other pregnant women looked so pale from the pain, and they had sweat on their faces. If they groaned from the pain, the doctor mercilessly kicked their belly hard and shouted, "Shut up! Don't feign pain!" I was waiting for my supervisor to take charge of me from the doctor at the corridor outside. I heard the crying voice of Byung-Ok Kim, 32 years old, and peeped into the room through the half-open door. She had just delivered a baby and cried, "Sir, please save the baby. My parents-in-law are anxiously waiting for the baby. Please, please save the baby." She was out of her mind with sorrow. All the other women remained quiet and she was the only woman crying and begging loudly. The doctor was taken momentarily by

surprise. But soon, he regained himself and shouted, "You want to die, eh? Kill the baby!" He kicked her hard.

Then, the Chief Medical Officer came in and said, "Who was it yelling like that? Put her in the punishment cell!" The Chief Medical Officer kicked her hard several times and had her dragged to the punishment cell because she could not hold herself up. This is one of the scenes that I will never forget. She died shortly after she was released from the cell.

Public Execution in Prison

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



Public executions are standard practice in and outside prisons in North Korea. In 1988, seven men and one woman were publicly executed in the Kaechon prison without trial. At each public execution, all the prisoners, some six thousand (1,8002,000 women and 4,000 men), are crammed into the prison square to watch.

The victims are always gagged so they cannot protest. They are tied to a pole in three parts; chest, sides and knees. Six guards fire three bullets each into the chest for a total of 18 bullets. With the top ropes having been cut by the bullets, the upper part of the body hangs down bleeding, like a rotten log broken in half, still tied to the pole by the lower ropes. Then, all the prisoners are forced to march around the dead body and watch.

Prisoners Go Insane from Watching Public Executions



The execution victims include those who pleaded for death during torture, stole food, or simply wept over the fate of two small children left home alone. The charge was lack of confidence in the mother party. Also included are those who are branded as "anti-party elements" or "reactionaries."

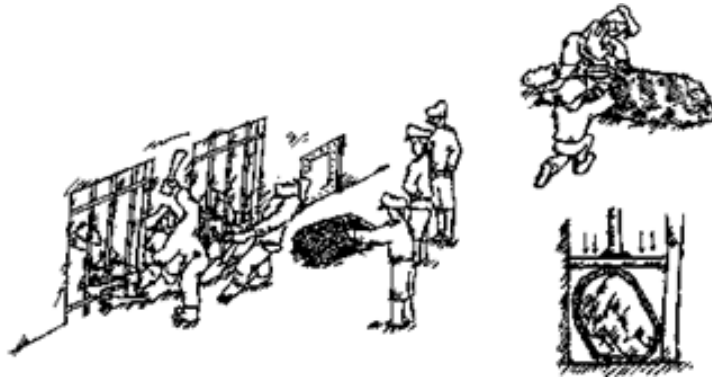
The public execution ground is so crammed with prisoners that the women in the front watch the killing from a distance of only a meter or so and often get blood splashed on them. Some women prisoners are so shocked that they vomit, faint, or develop mental illness (e.g., sudden singing or laughing hysterically). They are sent to punishment cells for being "weak in ideology" and "showing sympathy to the peo-

ple's enemy." Those who become completely insane simply disappear and nobody knows what happens to them.

Hi-suk Choi and Young-ok Choi, housewives from Kimchaek City, were punished for singing at the site and later died of shock during electric torture. The Kaechon Prison has twenty punishment cells that are always full of "ideologically weak" prisoners on the days of public executions.

Prisoners Killed in Temperature-regulated Compression Chamber

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



There are executioners in the Interrogation Department of the Provincial Security Headquarters. Here, they execute the prisoners that they are embarrassed to execute publicly. They always execute prisoners at midnight without trial and bury the corpses in a nearby valley.

There is also a temperature-regulated compression chamber used for torturing or killing. The chamber is 60 square centimeters and the height is adjustable according to the prisoner's height. A prisoner is pushed into a rice straw bag first, and then into the chamber with his head pushed down between his knees. These acts usually occur between one and two o'clock in the morning. Freezing temperatures are used in the winter and hot temperatures in the summer.

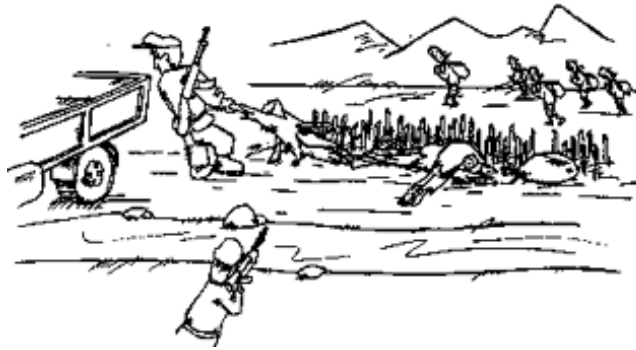
A 17 year-old boy, the son of a welder in Kimchaek Steel Factory, was brought here sometime in October 1987. He was arrested for organizing gang fighting in school. Gang fighting is considered a very serious crime leading to subversion in North Korea. He was killed in the chamber by freezing in the midnight. I heard this from Yong-ho, a guard, who proudly told us, "You bitches better obey unless you want to be killed like the boy, frozen and compressed." In fact, other guards repeated similar threats.

A young man became lunatic as a result of continuing torture. He complained one day, "Great Leader? What has he done for me?" He was frozen to death in the chamber that night.

The chamber was next to my cell at the end of the corridor. The cries of a prisoner resisting and angry voices of guards trying to push him into a rice straw bag and into the chamber always woke me up. I always found executioners in uniform and with a star on their shoulders on such occasions. During the 14 months I was there, I remember five or six killings in the chamber.

**Male Prisoners Shot to Death for Attempting to Get “Edible Clay” from
Women Prisoners**

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



At the end of February 1990, we were carrying edible clay in bags. Some male prisoners on the other side of the river must have seen us eating the clay. They looked like skeletons with skulls and bright eyes. They gestured to us begging for some clay. None of us responded for fear of punishment. Desperately, three of them came to our side of the river to get some clay.

Suddenly, we heard shooting. It was a horrible scene when the shooting ended. We were all so scared. The intestines of one of the male prisoners were protruding. But he was still alive because we heard his feeble voice whispering, “Help!” The second prisoner had his leg broken and bleeding. The third prisoner was dead instantly. Soon a truck arrived and an officer said, “Put them all onto the truck, dead or alive.” We were told to resume our work. That night, some twenty women complained of pain and died as a result of having eaten too much clay.

At the end of February 1990, we were bringing fresh soil from a nearby mountain to the prison farm. It was very tiring to climb up the mountain to bring fresh soil all the way down to the farm. Because it was February and still cold, we could not find any plants to eat in the mountain, no matter how desperately we looked. It was too early in the season.

One day, I saw some prisoners eating clay. As always, we were exhausted, hungry and thirsty. One of them said to me, “Accountant, you want some? This is good and tasty. Try it.” I wasted no time and ate it. It was clay and, indeed, starchy and tasted good. I ate half the size of my fist that day and I felt somewhat full and even felt some strength, too. Our unit moved our burrow to a riverside location when the killing of three male prisoners took place.

Prisoners Shot to Death for Falling on a Steep Slope

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



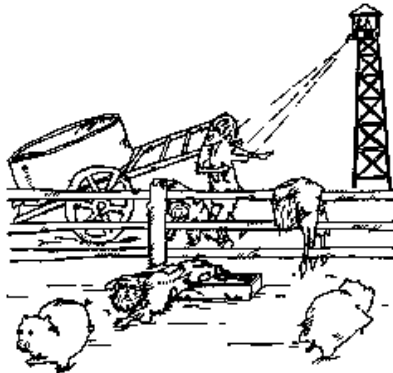
In February, 1988, while carrying a 20 kilogram bag of top soil from a mountain to the prison farm, an exhausted female prisoner slipped and fell on the slope, causing two other prisoners also to fall from the path. Although they could have been helped up to rejoin the line, they were immediately shot and killed. The prison guards shouted at the rest of the women, "Did you see what happened? This will happen to you if you fall!"

Every February, all the prisoners are mobilized to carry top-soil from Kaechon Mountain to the prison farm. The mountain is outside the prison, 600 meters high, very rugged and slippery when climbing up and down the steep slope.

Each female prisoner must carry a 20-kg bag of topsoil on her back all the way down to the farmland. Prisoners are kicked and beaten for any bag that weighs less than 20 kilograms. 300 prison guards and 350 policemen line up on the path with rifles pointing at the prisoners. The prisoners are ordered to make three trips in the morning and three more trips in the afternoon. Climbing up and down a 600-meter mountain six times a day is like torture. The prisoners were warned that if they strayed from the path by even a step they would be shot to death instantly.

Prisoners Killed for Eating Pig Slops

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



There is no wasted food in the prison kitchen. The kitchen prisoners always give the leftover food from outside to the pigs. So, the pigs are always well-fed and fat for the security officers. The prisoners envy the pigs for the good food and leisure. The dung carrying team is also responsible for cleaning the pigsty. The prisoners

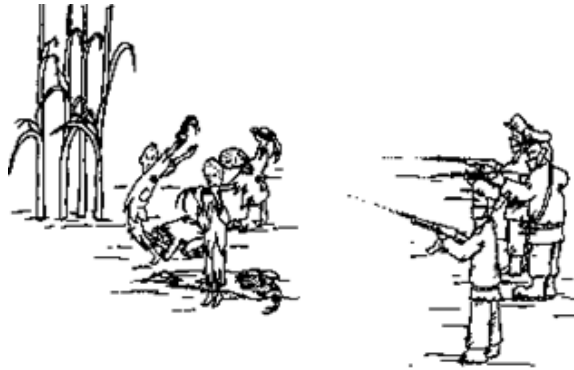
carrying dung are always so hungry that many of them risk their lives to steal the pig slops as they pass by. When caught eating the pigs' feed, they are shot and killed.

The prisoners on the dung-carrying team look forward to cleaning the pigsty because they can eat the leftovers from the slops with their hands still filthy with dung. The prisoners on the pig-raising team supply pig slops when the prisoners come to clean the pigsties so that the cleaning prisoners can enjoy the chance to have a "good meal" with the pigs.

Kum-bok Kim was from Kanggye town, Jagang Province. She was pretty and a very kind-hearted woman. Once, she was caught giving the pigs their feed when other prisoners were around cleaning. She was badly beaten by a prison official and kicked until she fainted. She was forced to confess her crime in writing and was sent for further investigation. She died under torture during the investigation.

Prisoners Shot for Stealing Corn

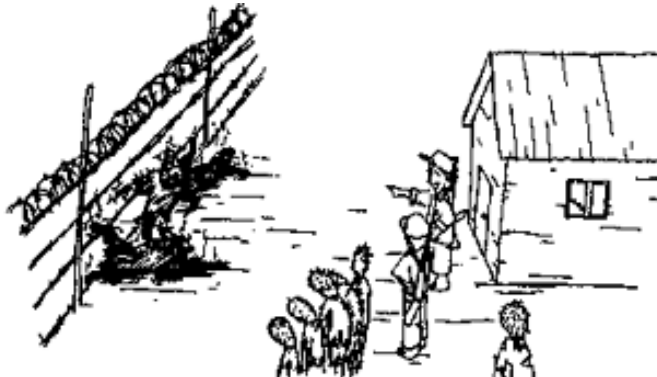
WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



All prisoners are mobilized once a year for harvest work in the prison farm. Some 400 guards watch while the prisoners work outside the prison. In September 1990, five male prisoners could not resist the temptation of eating raw corn during work and so they stole some ears and hurried to eat them. I was delivering a work order to a unit nearby at that time. The five prisoners were shot instantly by the guards without warning. In the prison, few trials or investigations were ever held for punishing or killing prisoners. Punishing and killing prisoners without trial or investigation were within the power of the prison superintendent.

Guards Killing Prisoners for Fun

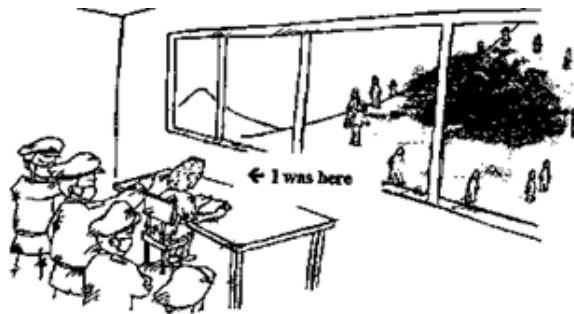
WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



A couple of times, I saw guards stop a group of male prisoners for fun. "Hey, you and you, come here. If you cross the barbed wire, I will let you go home." With these words, the prison guards tempted prisoners to cross the electrified barbed wire. The prisoners were so desperate and confused that, without hesitation, they jumped to their death with the faint hope of going home. This shows how prisoners are considered disposable and easily replaced. This is not an isolated incident. I have heard about it several times and have myself seen it happen twice during the five years I was in prison.

Prisoners Killed During the Testing of a New Chemical Poison

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



One day in February, 1990, I was doing routine paper work at the staff operation office at around 10:00 o'clock in the morning when, to my surprise, the prison superintendent, vice-superintendent, intelligence chief and three other unidentified officials walked into the room. One of them pointed to something outside my window. I was very terrified at their unusual appearance. Then, I overheard them saying, "Look! How powerful. What a great scientist Dr. Sung-ki Lee is, indeed! Well, from now on, its chemical warfare." Shortly afterwards, as I was walking to the other side of the room to deliver some papers to my guard, I saw them seriously watching something outside the window. On my way back to my desk, I took a quick glance outside. I saw many prisoners lying on the slope of a hill, bleeding from their mouths and motionless, enveloped by strange fumes and surrounded by scores of guards in the gas masks I delivered to the Chief Guard earlier in the morning.

In February, 1990, I was asked by the Chief Guard to follow him to an administration warehouse at 05:30 in the morning. He ordered me to check out six bundles (five pairs in each bundle) of gas masks with rubber gowns, which looked like a sea diver's kit. When I returned to my prison chamber, a total of 150 prisoners, several from each unit, were selected and separated from the other prisoners. The selected prisoners were mostly crippled and weak women who had less labor value.

I had to issue instructions for lunch with the same usual number for the male prisoners but 150 meals less for women. The prisoners started to exchange nervous looks with each other when the 150 prisoners did not return to work. An air of unusual tension and fear spread among the prisoners.

Normally, when a prisoner is sent to a punishment cell, an announcement is always made about why the prisoner is being punished to warn others. But that night, so many prisoners were sent to punishment cells for whispering, looking around nervously and exchanging signs of tension without the usual announcement. That night, the punishment cells were all full with a long list of prisoners awaiting the punishment. Obviously, the prison authorities attempted to cover up the killings.

Around October, 1990, an engineer supervisor was sent here from the defense chemistry factory in Hamhung. He was responsible for an explosion in the factory there and was secretly executed at an underground cell in about a month. At that time, I was told to reduce the number of meals by one in the kitchen. Later, I was confidentially informed about the killing by a prisoner/nurse who was involved in getting rid of the corpse.

At that time, 500 female prisoners were sent from here to the Hwachon area for some kind of expansion work of a chemical factory. The prisoners returned in about a month's time. One of the prisoners told me that there was a special chemical research institute in Hwsachon.

Prisoners Killed During a Biological Test

WITNESSED BY SO LEE, FORMER FEMALE PRISONER OF A POLITICAL PRISON



One day in May 1988, I had been in the prison for only six months and I was still trying to get accustomed to the prison conditions. I was working on the second floor of the export factory moving half-finished products from one table to another for assembly. During lunch time, I saw a pile of fresh cabbages at the kitchen entrance through the windows. This was the only time I saw cabbages in such good shape at the prison. I was so hungry that I began to wonder who would be the lucky people to eat them.

A little later when I came back to the same spot, I saw some fifty women prisoners eating the cabbage from a bowl with their fingers. The cabbages appeared somehow steamed. Soon, I saw the prisoners vomiting, bleeding from their mouths and moaning on the ground. I could not stay to watch more.

However, when I came back to the same spot again after a little while, I saw camp guards loading the dead prisoners onto a truck.

There were several strangers in white gowns around the dying prisoners. This was very strange because the political prison was under such strict control that no strangers were allowed inside. Then, I remembered that some fifty women had been told to come outside earlier, a few from each work unit.

Later, it was announced that they died from food poisoning. The prisoners knew what happened and they started to inform each other through their eyes. The prison officials were very nervous trying to keep the prisoners quiet. Why were the prison officials so nervous over the food poisoning when its mention was not a subject for punishment on other occasions? Unusually, many prisoners were sent to punishment cells that night for whispering or looking nervous.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT

From Harbin to Hong Kong: The Final Chapter of My Escape from North Korea

Those of you who read my book *Eyes of the Tailless Animals* know the account of my son's and my escape from North Korea in the winter of 1994 and subsequent wandering around Northeast China in 1994 and 1995. It records how we made our way to Heilongjiang Province where a number of different people gave us refuge. As I noted we were being pursued by North Korean plainclothes police inside China. They were determined to find us as they did not want a former inmate of the North Korean camps organized to hold political prisoners to reach the outside world and bear witness to the human rights abuses taking place inside the camps. My book finishes with us making our way to South Korea via Hong Kong but does not contain the particulars of our route from Harbin to Hong Kong. The following are the details of that round-about refugee trail:

After moving from place to place with a price on our heads, we finally came to the city of Harbin, where a Korean-Chinese family helped us out of kindness, for a period of a few weeks. We heard there that the North Korean security services had undergone great anxiety when they learned that a former prison camp inmate had escaped to China. As I noted in my book, I was the only one I knew of to be released during my years in the camp; I was only released due to a desire to show official leniency and to gain good publicity on the occasion of Kim Il Sung's 80th birthday celebration. I also believe it was seen by prison authorities as a means of showing those in the camp that, if they studied Kim Il Sung's philosophy with diligence, worked hard, and truly reformed, they could anticipate being released some day. Still, I was the only one released and I still consider it a miracle.

After being released, the security authorities naturally kept me under close surveillance so they knew immediately when my son and I illegally left for China in February, 1994. Thus, there was a widespread manhunt on for us even in Harbin, far from the North Korean border. This last family wanted to assist us, but they had to think of their own and our safety. They advised us to go to Beijing to seek help getting to South Korea. Surely, I thought, my compatriots at the South Korean Embassy will help me? We are the same race, the same people, the same blood. The family bought train tickets for my son and me and we took the train to Beijing planning to make our way to the South Korean Embassy.

Beijing in the summer of 1995 was hosting the UN's International Conference on Women to discuss human rights. I, as a Korean woman and mother, made my way to the South Korean Embassy for help. Instead of the warm reception from my own people which I expected, I was received in a cold-hearted and rough manner. For two hours I begged for help; pleaded that my son and I were on the run and were being pursued by North Korean agents. "Go away," they said. With nothing, my son and I left after two hours.

My son, 26, who had a knack for languages and had learned some Chinese during our journey across northern China, came up with an idea. He said we should go to a port city where there was cargo traffic between China and South Korea and try to stowaway on a ship.

My son found a Chinese truck driver at a warehouse in Beijing who drove cargo between Beijing and Qingdao, the Chinese main port city on the Shandong peninsula where there is a lot of trade with South Korea. The Chinese driver took pity on us and agreed to drive us for free to

Qingdao. When we arrived at the factory near the Qingdao docks which was the driver's final destination, he told us that he would be back in a week to pick up more cargo. He said that if we had no luck in getting out of Qingdao to go to South Korea he would meet us in the same place exactly one week later and take us back to Beijing.

We hid among sacks of corn piled on the dock for one week. Cargo ships going to South Korea were there. There were also many Chinese customs and other officials so we had to hide ourselves. My son wanted me to climb the ropes that moored the cargo ships to the docks and get on board a South Korean-bound vessel. However, my legs were still crippled from the torture I received in the concentration camp and my shoulder and back were also in pain. The decks of the ships were too high. I just could not make it up the ropes to the waiting deck. We also failed to find any South Korean merchant sailor in an isolated situation where we could seek help. After a week we gave up. We decided to meet the kind Chinese truck driver at the agreed rendezvous point and to return to Beijing. There we would try our luck one last time at the South Korean Embassy.

When we arrived in Beijing, before going to the South Korean Embassy again, I went to a pharmacy and purchased rat poison. I placed the poison in two plastic bags, one for my son's pocket and one for my own. I told my son that if we failed to get help this time, we would die on the streets of Beijing rather than be returned by force to North Korea.

We came to the South Korean Embassy at nine o'clock in the morning and stayed until approximately six p.m. in the evening. We were interviewed by two South Korean officials, "Minister Counselor" Choi, as everyone called him, and "Consul" Hong. I begged and pleaded for help. "Please save the lives of my son and myself!" I cried. "You are our fellow countrymen. North Korean agents are looking for me as the one who has knowledge of their concentration camps. They will not let me live. If you do not help my son and me, I will be sent back and will die in North Korea." Choi and Hong said there was no way they would or could help. They said that my son and I should go away. I asked what would happen if I went to the American Embassy. They told me that I did not understand international relations. "If you go to the American Embassy they will just call us and we still won't help you," they said cold-heartedly.

I became hysterical. I cried bitter tears. I begged them to help me, to save our lives. As the day wore on, they lost patience. They said that if my son and I did not leave at once they would call the Chinese police and have us arrested. I told them that this meant death, that the Chinese police would give us to the North Koreans and that I at least would surely die. They just didn't care. My own people turned their backs on me. Even now when I remember this experience I am moved to tears. At six p.m. they said "We close the doors now. You must leave." Six Embassy officials pushed me and my son out of the diplomatic compound and into the street, closing the door on us. We were all alone.

I told my son there was no hope. We were all alone in the world. I said that "No one will help us, so we must die." We went to a city park in Beijing near the South

Korean diplomatic compound. We sat on the ground dejected, waiting for the courage to take the poison. An old Chinese gentleman, out for his evening exercise, came by. He noticed that we looked alone and depressed. "What is wrong?" He asked. "Can I help you?"

My son explained our circumstances. The old man was intelligent; he looked like he had once been a high Chinese government official. He said that he could take us to the Embassy of a third country where he was certain they would help us. It was a long way. He took us to the gates of that country's Embassy and said "please go in." We entered, not really knowing what to expect.

Two diplomats, a man and a woman, listened to our story. We told them that we had been twice to the South Korean Embassy and that all help there had been refused. They agreed to help us. They made arrangements for us to go to Hong Kong. I was in Hong Kong for forty days because this third country Embassy arranged for me to be hospitalized to recover from some of the injuries brought about by torture in the prison camp. Then the British allowed us to leave Hong Kong and to travel to South Korea. (This was before reversion of control of Hong Kong to China.)

This is my story.

Signed: Lee Soon Ok, May 2, 2002

Mr. LEACH. Well, thank you, Ms. Lee. There have been extraordinary testimonies brought before the Congress, through it's long history, but yours is one of the most stunning in its details of human hardship. Mr. Lee?

Before you commence, Mr. Lee, I want to apologize. There are more votes coming on the House Floor and I wanted to let Ms. Lee continue because of the depth of her experience and convictions, but we do have some timing problems. And I hope that will be understood.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Lee?

STATEMENT OF LEE YOUNG-KOOK, FORMER BODYGUARD OF KIM JONG-IL AND PRISON CAMP SURVIVOR

Mr. LEE. First of all, I wish to thank you for this testimony for the human rights in North Korea. Special thanks to the Chairman and the Committee Members and to all present.

I was a member in the protective service of Kim Jong-Il for 11 years. Then I moved to the North Korean Labor Party position and worked there. Then I attempted my escape in 1994, got caught, was abducted by to North Korea and spent 4 years as a political prisoner in Yodok.

I left the Labor Party management position in January 5th of 1999. And by April, I came to China. I came into the bosom of the Republic of Korea in May of 2000. As you can see, I have recovered my good health and I can provide testimony before you. My first thanks to the Republic of Korea.

For 11 years in protecting Kim Jong-Il, I have spoken to Kim Jong-Il. He, at times, could be considerate and I performed policy missions, also. But then I had to go to the Yodok prison camp, and became a handicapped, crippled man. Nonetheless, I am able to provide testimony in front of you here today. I could really feel how serious and important a subject it is, the human rights problem in North Korea.

I could go on and on describing the painful experience I had at the Yodok political prisoners camp, but I will choose just a couple. I was caught in Beijing, as I reported earlier. I was kidnapped, abducted. Morphine injections were put into me. Sleeping pills were given to me and my body was covered with plastic and taken back

to North Korea and I suffered tortures while held in a dungeon—an underground prison.

But I was able to leave because my brother was the driver for Kim Jong-Il. And my brother is driver for Kim Jong-Il and in the protective service, I was Kim Jong-Il's bodyguard as an officer. The prison camp I was held at is divided into sections or departments. The criminals and those responsible for crime, allegedly, and their members were put together in the same place.

In 1997 there was a rumor that we would be visited by an international organization. So in Yodok new buildings went up. Renovation was made.

In Yodok camp I saw one prisoner who had been there for 25 years. His crime none other than that he said Kim Jong-Il's system was a bad one and that he was opposed to it.

People there are put to an unnatural death, like a live man dying. And I saw 200 of them die like that in a year. One problem there is food—eating and surviving. We were given a meal of 130 grams a day, but put to work for 16 hours a day. Those who are held in Yodok camp wouldn't know God or Heaven to pray to. And they die like that. In the end, their bodies are swollen so much in the chest and in the legs, and strange liquids are seeping out like water. Then they have their last breath and become a corpse. Then they are taken out into the mountain and buried without any grave markings. Around Yodok camp there were 2,000 such graves.

I am reporting to you about the dying people. So people die in such a way. People die because they say something wrong or something that should have not been not said. Some are killed by gunfire while trying to escape. Some die in public executions. And when one dies and bleeds, those around him or her are told to move up to the body and to pick up the blood and make a hand print, so that the prisoner would never think about escaping himself or herself.

I apologize, Chairman, I'll do the first portion and the second portion I missed. I'll be brief. Let's talk about one who escaped the camp because he was so hungry. He was 22 years old and he went next door to Tas Son Lee and he was successful at hiding for 3 days. But by the third day he was finally caught—he was hit by a gunshot in the leg and taken back to the camp in a Russian jeep. He was taken out by the Russian jeep to the execution site and we were all watching and were all told to make a hand print in his blood.

Mr. LEACH. Excuse me. I apologize. This is extremely moving testimony, but we are obligated to recess briefly for the vote. So when we return, we will return to this testimony. So the Committee is in recess, pending the vote on the House Floor.

[Recess.]

Mr. LEACH. The Subcommittee will reconvene. Let me apologize and explain. We have a difficulty that on the Floor is a bill from the Full Committee, and it's a very important bill. So Members are generally obligated to be on the Floor when a Committee bill is up. But I want to be able to finish the testimony of Mr. Lee. And at the risk of presumption, would hope that it would not be extremely long.

Please proceed.

Mr. LEE. Chairman Leach, with your permission, I wish to finish the last portion of the testimony.

Mr. LEACH. Of course.

Mr. LEE. The way this 22-year old man was caught and put to death, the making of handprints in his blood, and the way his body was disposed of were all a shock to me. And it lingers inside me as a nightmare even until today. I was taken back to the prison and beaten up so badly that my eyes went bad. My eardrums were all burst out. The two teeth I have, if they still have nerves, are not good enough to chew food.

In other parts of my experience in the Yodok management station, I was beaten up. And I always would hear people crying, asking for help, asking for their lives to be spared. Such a sad petition and all of them are still bothering me very much. Inside the station or in the prison, people are fed with salt soup only, while the work they have to do—the forced labor—is such a hard task that they are dying right now today.

If prisoners could, they would catch rats, snakes, and even eat grasses. I hear them asking for help and to save their lives and that is what is going on right now. Remembering back, I'm doing my best to forget those things that happened, but somehow all these memories are all imprinted so hard into my brain, I can hardly get rid of them.

If I could sleep, I would do so during the night. I cannot sleep. At best, in the night I fall asleep 2 o'clock in the morning and wake up at 5 o'clock. Mostly, I stay up all night with my eyes open. I try to forget, but I cannot. My teeth are bad and I cannot chew food very well. So I am experiencing lots of difficulties.

What crime did I commit? I wanted to come to the bosom of South Korea for freedom. For such a wish and hope, I became a political prisoner. I was put into the criminals' camp. While I was in North Korea inside the prison of Kim Jong-Il, I did not know. But once I got out of it, I could easily see what a bad regime Kim Jong-Il is in charge of.

I came to South Korea for freedom, and I had suffered great pains; but that's just me. At this very moment, hundreds of thousands of North Koreans are suffering the same fate in North Korea, and they are falling down and dying. With such a thought, I am a firm believer that the human rights in North Korea should be as soon as possible recovered and respected.

President Bush remarked that North Korea is a part of the axis of evil, but he kindly separated the evil North Korean regime from the innocent North Korean people, which I appreciated so much. When we talk about North Korea, the land of North Korea, that's Kim Jong-Il. When we talk about North Korean people, we are talking about the slaves of Kim Jong-Il.

Kim Jong-Il's aim is to live well for himself and for his system and for his regime. He is binding the entire population and then puts them into political prisons if they are critical of him or his system. That's why North Korea was not able to make any progress into modern times. It belongs to the 19th Century.

The World Food Program, the Republic of Korea, and the United States societies are all together helping the people of North Korea to solve their problem of starvation and famine. That is admirable.

In the same context, if we would all work together, the entire world, one by one, to solve the human rights problems in North Korea, I am confident that the North Korean problem could be solved.

I believe it is a way to solve the problems of human rights in North Korea. That's why they always come up with some type of condition. We'll accept your rice if you do this or that. So such conditions will all go away. The North Korean regime cannot survive if the problem of human rights is solved first.

Finally, I wish to make two proposals. The first, we need to have refugees from North Korea into China have status as legitimate international refugees. Along with that, we need to establish refugee centers, each in the capacity of 10,000 refugees to take care of. If we see this status recognized and refugee centers established, North Korea will crumble overnight. And those refugee centers could be established in Russia and in Mongolia.

The second proposal I wish to make is that the North Korean refugees in China should not be forced back to North Korea. China is going to be the host nation for the 2008 World Olympics, so we should raise the problems of human rights, along with prevention of repatriation of the North Korean refugees in China back to North Korea. I sincerely hope that they will not repeat the life I have lived. Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEE YOUNG-KOOK, FORMER BODYGUARD OF KIM JONG-IL
AND PRISON CAMP SURVIVOR

I WAS A FORMER BODYGUARD OF DEAR LEADER, KIM JONG-IL

I was born in the Musan District, North Hamkyong province, North Korea, on May 16, 1962. My father was a locomotive operator and my mother was a farmer at a local collective farm. I have four sisters in North Korea. I joined the North Korean army in May, 1978 after finishing my high school education in my hometown and did the customary 10 years of military service. Until my discharge in May 1988, I served as one of the 200 closest bodyguards of the "dear leader" Kim Jong-il and often talked with Kim face to face.

After discharge from the military service, I became a senior party member at my hometown for almost 3 years—between June of 1988 and April of 1991. During this time, I slowly began to be aware of the various injustices and oppressive nature of the North Korean system. Atrocities committed against the people was standard practice. I secretly listened to the South Korean radio programs for information about the outside world.

In April 1991, I was sent to the Central Party Military College in Pyongyang. I graduated from the 3-year course in April 1994. Indeed, I was in a privileged position with a promising future in North Korean society. I was sent back to my senior position in the workers' party in April, 1994 for additional on-the-spot training in my hometown. However, my conscience was always tormented by the North Korean reality, and my interest in the outside world and my yearning for freedom grew even stronger.

On October 1, 1994, I defected to China. Unfortunately, after about two months in China, I was kidnapped in Beijing by North Korean agents on December 4, 1994. Two days later, on December 6, I was shipped to Pyongyang via North Korea's airline. Before being put on the plane, I was given injections that made me unconscious. My arms and legs were strapped to long pieces of metal rods with bandages, then my body was tied to a stretcher. I was brutally beaten at the North Korean embassy and during a 6-month interrogation by the State Security Agency in Pyongyang, I lost 6 teeth, my left eye was badly injured, and one of my eardrums was broken.

They spared my life because of the influence of my relatives. I was sent to the Yodok concentration camp on May 26, 1995 and was released on January 5, 1999. Shortly after my release, I was again arrested on 28 April 1999 for remarks I made

to my relatives and friends about the outside world. I was handcuffed and escorted at night by the state security officers. I broke away from them on the way. They were shooting at me from behind and they eventually lost me. I ran up a nearby mountain and arrived in China the next day. I arrived in South Korea on May 22, 2000 after hiding in China for about a year.

A record of my nightmare at the concentration camp would take up more than 200 pages. To say only a few quick words about the prisoners' life in the camp, for example, prisoners were forced to carry their own feces in their hands to manure the cornfield nearby after every bowel movement. I still have a skin problem with my hands as a result of this practice. The prisoners are so used to deaths that nobody is surprised when anyone dies. Actually, I carried over 200 bodies on my back and buried them at a hillside in the camp.

One of the many unforgettable tragedies I witnessed happened to a 22-year-old man who had been repatriated from China. Sometime in July, 1997, this young man named "Yong-chol" unsuccessfully attempted to escape from the camp. When he was arrested, one of his legs already had been seriously wounded from a gunshot. Some 1,000 men and women prisoners were ordered to stand in line on both sides of the road near the hill where he was caught. Guards gagged the young man and tied his legs up to the trailer hitch of a Russian truck, then dragged him for about 4 kilometers in front of the prisoners, who were forced to watch. He was bleeding, and the scalp on the back of his head and the skin from his back were all gone by the time the truck stopped and he was finally executed publicly.

The camp officer warned the prisoners that this would be exactly what would happen to them if anybody else tried to escape. All the prisoners were forced to pass by the dead body and dip their hands in his blood. But suddenly a young man dashed out of the line, grabbed a microphone and shouted, "We are not beasts, are we? We are human beings, are we not? How can a human being treat another human being . . .!" Before he finished his last words, he was machine gunned from a nearby guard position temporarily set up for the public execution.

I weighed 94 kilograms when kidnapped in China and 53 kilograms when released from the concentration camp. During the ordeal, the sight of my right eye seriously deteriorated and my left eardrum was broken from severe beating. I lost many teeth and my legs still show marks of severe beating. All prisoners were treated with utmost atrocity and brutality. I saw so many deaths and mysterious disappearances of young prisoners (prisoners believed to have been sacrificed for human biological tests). I am prepared to testify to the crimes against humanity occurring in North Korea in detail to the best of my knowledge and do what I can to save the many innocent victims there.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you all. I want to return here to Ms. Lee's testimony that she submitted for the record and I would urge all of you to get a number of extra copies of her full testimony because she abbreviated that testimony. But I want to briefly talk about chemical and biological warfare and some of the experiments done, as reported by Ms. Lee, at the prison compound.

And she reports that in February 1990 an engineering supervisor was sent from the defense chemical factory in Homburg. And in her testimony, and I wanted to ask you about this, Ms. Lee. You say that:

"The chief guard ordered me to check out of the warehouse six bundles—five pairs in each bundle of gas masks with rubber gowns, which looked like a sea divers kit. When I returned to my prison chamber, a total of 150 prisoners—these were women—selected out of the women's unit were taken outside.

"I was issued instructions that there be 150 less women for lunch for that day, to prepare less meals. On my way back to my desk, I took quite a glance outside, Ms. Lee says, and I saw many prisons lying on the slope of a hill, bleeding from their mouths and motionless, enveloped by strange fumes and surrounded by scores of guards in the very gas masks I'd delivered to the chief guard earlier in the morning.

"In addition to these chemical experiments and the 150 victims were buried shortly thereafter, we also had the biological tests reported at the site. Fifty women prisoners who ended up vomiting, bleeding from their mouths and moaning on the ground, all shortly thereafter were dead, loaded onto a truck after the biological test."

Were there any other examples of chemical or biological testing done at the prison besides these two incidents you recounted in your testimony?

Ms. LEE. I was held at the Kaechon Reform Institute beginning in November 1987. And later on in May 1988, I heard that the experimentation with those materials was conducted extensively in the '80s, I heard that there were several experiments of such magnitude conducted.

I would not know anything that happened before I went to Kaechon Reform Institute, which was November of '87. But regarding those experiments conducted while I was there, I'm an eyewitness and I also happened to be nearby the experimentation sites.

Mr. ROYCE. Did you want to add something?

Ms. LEE. I was in charge of the financial tasks. I saw with my very own eyes in detail; particularly the gas experimentation you noted. I am the one who issued the gas masks to the research fellows and the security guards at the reform institute.

Whenever the gas experimentation was to take place in the reform institute, or the live body experimentation, at the time, the general prisoners would be sent back to their prison cells from their work sites. And the experimentation would take place in secret isolation. When Kim Il-Sung was alive, there was an internal direction or instruction that effectiveness of such experimentation would be greater if tested upon live bodies rather than animals.

Their experimentation on the germs for disease were also conducted. That's all I have to say.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. How fervently do the average North Koreans believe in the personality cult of Kim Jong-Il and Kim Il-Sung? Has the faith in Dear Leader been shaken by the famine and the food shortages in the past decade or, alternatively, do most people still revere the Dear Leader because of the propaganda? I would just ask the witnesses for their feeling about that.

I think it was Mr. Lee who said it wasn't until after he purchased a radio on the black market and began to listen to radio broadcasts that he began to suspect the truth about South Korea, that the people weren't, in your words, I think, falling worse and worse into starvation in South Korea. You began to believe that South Korea must be prosperous because of the radio broadcasts and began to question what you'd been told. And I just wondered how widespread that questioning was.

Mr. LEE. Since 1995, maybe about 50 percent of the population have changed their understanding, attitude, and consciousness about their regime. Since they don't have anything to eat, how could they say we have a good government? How could they say thank you great leader Kim Jong-Il, who is our father chief anymore.

The problem of filling one's stomach is so great that one has to go out and pick wild grass and eat it. So I should conclude that there is no family that hasn't had at least one of the family members victimized by the famine and starvation.

Currently, the North Korean residents seem to uphold Kim Jong-Il. And they say they are full of loyalty, but that's only propaganda. In actuality people do not like Kim Jong-Il, but since he has the reform institutes, management stations, and restricted areas, they are forced to pledge loyalty to Dear Leader Kim Jong-Il.

Mr. ROYCE. Let me ask you this. You're his former bodyguard or one of his bodyguards. Can you give us some personal observations about aspects of his life style or specific events that could describe to us a sense of his genuine character? It would be, I think, interesting to us to hear from someone who has been around Kim Jong-Il. Some aspects of his character—tell us about this individual. Thank you, Mr. Lee.

TRANSLATOR. Chairman, with your permission, I wish to finish the last portion of what he said. I wasn't quite done.

Mr. ROYCE. I'm sorry, sir. Go ahead.

Mr. LEE. The North Korean mass media, they have to get personal approval—Kim Jong-Il's signature every day to put their newspaper or news out—broadcast out. Therefore, there is no freedom of speech and printing.

I wish to be brief, Chairman. Kim Jong-Il's daily schedule is not published as it is with the President of the United States. Therefore, we would have difficulty knowing that he's doing; especially, in his private life. But what I do know is that Kim Jong-Il is a very clever man. His brain is excellent. He is very ambitious and he's a great schemer. From behind the scenes, he plans and organizes things he wants done. If he doesn't feel very good, or is upset or mad, even one who has been loyal to him for a long time could be ordered arrested in a split second.

Mostly, he makes decisions. He drinks a lot. He continues with his work while having drinks. Politics in North Korea is carried out by Kim Jong-Il and his younger sister, Kim Kyong Hee. Those two are the highest political operators.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

Mr. LEE. Kim Jong-Il is in fear of the United States most. Inside of him, he is always being very watchful. But on the outside, he raises his voice. I believe such a diplomatic technique has worked for him up to today. North Korea has been successful. U.S. efforts to approach him have not been successful. He, as I said to you, is a very clever man. If one could do one, he could 5 or 10.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, thank you. I want to thank you all for your level of commitment and your bravery. And I want to thank Mr. Vollertsen for his compassion of spending 18 months in North Korea, and end with one question of Dr. Vollertsen. And that is, the concept of putting up maybe refugee centers in Mongolia or in Russia, additionally, do you think that would have promise? Is that something we should be looking at in Congress and encouraging that kind of a development for North Korean refugees? Thank you.

Dr. VOLLERTSEN. I'm absolutely sure about that. That it will work. I know there are some negotiations with the Mongolian government on the way. And also, some other negotiation—the only

need is a lot of money for those refugee camps. There are old Russian facilities near the Mongolian-Chinese border. These facilities are very recently examined and they are quite in good condition. We actually checked that there are some possibilities for medical facilities. And I will be very eager to go to this area in the summer-time in order to create such refugee camps, but we need the help of the international community.

The Mongolian authority, they, declare very open mind that they want to do so, even when there is some maybe disagreement from the Chinese or North Korean government, but they are in urgent need for money. The Mongolian government actually suffers from drought and bad winter seasons 2—those last 2 years ago. So they are in urgent need for money and simply put it like this, for money they will do everything. Even get in some trouble with China. So I think there is an urgent need to do so. I know there are many, many North Koreans who are very eager to go to Mongolia.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, we're going to follow up on that and Chris Smith is a leader in the Human Rights Caucus here on the Hill, and I'm going to go to Mr. Smith. But we'll be working with Chris also on this issue.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Like you and our very distinguished Chairman who convened this hearing, I want to thank our very distinguished panel of heroes—of courageous people. I frankly think words are inadequate to express, from here, just how numbing and how heartbreaking it is to hear the cruelty that you've suffered.

I just wanted to make it very clear that very often human rights take a back seat in geo-political considerations. The big talk for the last 10 years has been light-water reactors as well as providing food aid. And human rights, whether it be religious persecution or this pervasive use of torture. Whenever any of us brought it out, it got no hearing.

Ms. Lee, your book was published in 1999. A few Members and a few people in the international community have read it. I think this is a must read for anyone who is concerned about torture in Northern Korea.

You made an appeal that the international community sit up and take note. I have every reason to believe that the Bush Administration, at the next U.N. Convention on Human Rights, will push for a resolution condemning the use of torture and the human rights atrocities committed by the Dear Leader, who really ought to be called the Dear Torturer when that body convenes.

It is worth noting that U.S. government officials asked the European Union, its representatives on that body to table or to introduce a resolution on North Korea, and they rejected our request.

I'm looking, again, Ms. Lee, at your book, the discussion in here about the killing of babies, which you described as "the most cruel human behavior I have ever seen in my life." Just for the Members of the Committee and for the record:

"The mothers of these newborn babies just laid on the floor and sobbed so helplessly while a medical prisoner's shaking hands twisted the baby's neck. Some of the women screamed and were beaten. The baby struggled for a short second, but

they died so easily. Male prisoners wrapped the babies in rags and dumped them in a basket.”

You also talked about forced abortion. You talked about the use of mental hospitals or mental asylums and the use of electric torture. And then, the one case of the women in the feces tank was just outrageous. Five women died. One fell into a feces tank. One by one, other women went in to help her, and then the officer said close the door and they died a very cruel death.

Elsewhere you talk about the killing of Christians who refuse to convert, the pouring of molten iron on them, one by one. The use of prisoners for martial art practice. The water torture that you suffered yourself. All of that, I think, points out the unspeakable cruelty of Kim Jong-Il and his dictatorship. All the more reason why this Committee, this Congress, our President, and everyone who believes in human rights needs to shout from the rooftops that these atrocities must end.

I do have just a few very brief questions as you’ve been very patient, all of you, with your time.

One on religious freedom. We know that for international audiences very often the government will showcase a few government-run churches to try to give the air of religious freedom. Has that been your case? Does the government run that kind of operation where they have a few churches with government-controlled people trying to give the air of religious tolerance?

Ms. LEE. North Korea, into the late ’80s—1988 and 1989—allowed Christians to come visit North Korea from overseas. And these foreign visitors, when they were Christians, they would naturally want to go to church on Sundays. But they did not have any churches in North Korea then. So for propaganda use purposes, to be recognized by the foreign visitors, they built two Presbyterian churches, Bongsu Church and Chilgol Church—probably two locations.

And then, for the Catholics, they built Jangchung Church, a Catholic church. They are all for propaganda only.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Lee, do you agree with that, and Mr. Kim, is that your understanding as well?

Mr. LEE. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Yes?

Mr. LEE. I agree with Ms. Lee. I not only agree, but say that Christianity is impossible in North Korea. It is not allowed because they have self-reliance principle and philosophy. If Christianity comes in, Juche will have to go out, which is not logical and impossible. It’s only an excuse that they have church or religious freedom.

The Labor Party is governed by the 10 major principles. And the very first principle insists that other than self-reliance, no other principles or philosophies are acceptable.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Kim, did you want to comment on that?

Mr. KIM. Thank you, Chairman. I came a long way and so far am mainly talking about what happened in the past. I believe more in what we are going to do into the future or even right now, for this moment. I have heard that there are three refugees from North Korea in China who got caught and whose lives are in danger. So I wish we could help them and save them first.

We were talking about religious problems, so I will go back to the point. The religious freedom and the existence of churches in North Korea, that's a false, fictitious image. Falsely made by North Korea in order to maintain its regime and for international relations sake.

Having said that, I also, again, reiterate that those who are about to die should be helped first.

Mr. SMITH. Let me ask you just a few final questions and I'll ask them all and yield to all of you if you would respond. Dr. Vollertsen, as far as you know, were international bureaucrats deceived by this religious front, this deception that was put on. And generally speaking, were the unaware of the extensive and pervasive use of torture, either wittingly or unwitting?

I mean, you, yourself, after doing so much good humanitarian work got glimpse after glimpse. And a matter of fact, I appreciate, personally, you spending several hours with me delineating the horrific abuses several months ago. It was certainly an additional wake up call for me and my staff as just how terrible it is.

I would like to ask about trafficking; especially, Mr. Lee, if you were aware of women, especially, for forced prostitution? Whether that is an issue that you are aware of in North Korea.

You mention, Ms. Lee, in your book about the Korean POWs, that after 30 years later they were still being used as slaves. Well, the United States had approximately 8,000 missing in action/POWs. Many were presumed to be dead, but some not. Did you ever hear—Mr. Lee, you might have some information on this—about any Americans who are still held captive in North Korea? I will have some additional questions I would like to submit, but if you could answer those.

Mr. LEE. Thank you, Chairman. First, the Americans missing in action since the Korean War. I even did not know about that. I have not seen any, so I am ignorant. The young ladies sold and bought in trafficking for prostitution, I have not seen it with my own eyes. I've heard lots of stories, but none I have actually seen.

About the religious issue, yes, international community was lied to and cheated by the North Koreans. The principle of self-reliance is the one leader, there cannot be two, or more. So in principle, when North Korea was successful in maintaining its one-man regime, Kim Il-Sung and then Kim Jong-Il are equal to God. So as long as one of them is there, there is no way a second God could come in. Christianity is impossible because of self-reliance. For it to become possible, then we'd have to have Kim Jong-Il taken out of the picture.

Mr. KIM. Chairman, I'm the Chairman of Paektu-Halla Association. Paektu-san being the northernmost, highest mountain. Hallasan being the southernmost mountain in Cheju Island off the peninsula. That's the name of our association, made up of my friends who are all escapees from North Korea. Since they are not there, for their sake, I must tell you on their behalf about the church in North Korea.

Two churches mentioned are there for the Kim Jong-Il regime to prove to the people that North Korea is, indeed, a member of the international community. Also, as a means of attracting external assistance and aid, meaning from foreign nations and from the international community. Therefore, the churches in Korea have no

real meaning, no truthfulness and I have said this to you for my friends.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Vollertsen, did you want to respond in terms of the deception of international bureaucrats? Have they been deceived or are they just not knowledgeable about the torture, the fronting of a church in order to make it look as if there is some semblance of religious freedom? When will actually wake up and just—I mean, this hearing certainly is a wake up call.

Dr. VOLLERTSEN. Okay, about religious freedom, when I lived in North Korea for 1½ years, I met many, many German politicians who were shown around in capital city and we managed to visit two churches there. It was a real showcase because this pastor, he was not a real pastor. He was talking about Kim Jong-Il and his gratitude to finance these churches. He was talking a lot about Kim Jong-Il and he showed up around in this showcase. And I wondered, because you can simply prove that—I wondered, when I was going around, what's going on in these churches. He talked about service on Christmas Eve. He talked about the service on Easter and several hundreds of Christians were attending. And as simple proof, I went around those chairs and I simply touch the dust, the dust of the last 2 years, never used those chairs.

When I traveled around in Pyongyang nearly every Sunday and I had my own jeep, and with my driving license, I was allowed to go without any translator and driver. So I visited those churches on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock on Christmas Eve, on Easter, and there was never any Christians. It was closed. And in winter times it was snow in front of those churches, two meters of snow never carried away. So it was a real showcase to what's going on about Christianity.

All those other things, as a foreign in North Korea, you will never get the real image. That's the common known Sunshine policy in South Korea maybe. I'm arguing for some rain showers in this Sunshine policy. I think we have to care for those children.

We have to create some pressure in the international community, and I think we can't do it with this inside information. We can only do it with those refugees who are coming out and they're very eager now to testify because they can feel that there is some pressure from the international community. That there is some potential from the media.

So with this attention, I think we can spread the knowledge. And I'm absolutely sure that when people in the United States and the christian community there will know what happens, then they will care and then they will change the desperate situation of those children. I'm very sure about that. We can help and you must help to spread the message and get them involved.

Mr. SMITH. We'll certainly work very hard on that. As a matter of fact, we're looking at introducing a resolution that would at least lay out the facts concerning the humanitarian and human rights crisis in North Korea. And also, to call on our own government as well as getting the attention of the community, and as we get to it, the U.N. Convention on Human Rights to take very decisive action. This period of time of looking the other way is over. Even when the International Religious Freedom Commission and our own State Department looked at countries of particular concern,

somehow North Korea didn't make the initial list of egregiously violating countries, which was absurd.

Part of the explanation was, we don't have information. Well, we could make a presumption based on what the refugees and others were telling us. But now there is a body of information that grows by the day.

I just want to conclude, Ms. Lee, when you were in Beijing, seeking your freedom—I led a delegation to the U.N. Women's Conference, the Beijing Women's Conference. So I was in town when you were in town, but I was struck by your written statement about the gentleman that came by in the park when you were in the park with your son. He sounded an awful lot like an angel to me, after having encountered such atrocities and cruelty in your life, to finally find someone who had heart and some compassion.

And all of you, thank you for your courage. We've got to do our part, but you have done it in spades and I admire you and we all admire you very much. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. I want to thank you again for making the trip here to testify. I will attempt to obtain an abbreviated version of your testimony so that I can send that and maybe Congressman Smith, as former Chairman of the Human Rights Subcommittee, will want to join me in this to send this to our colleagues so that they can read the verbatims of some things that you've said here and that you've shared with us here today. So thank you all so much.

We'll adjourn this hearing at this time.

[Whereupon, at 4:05 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE HENRY J. HYDE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

I want to thank Chairman Leach for convening today's hearing, which will provide us with a rare glimpse into the "hermit kingdom" of North Korea. The excellent witnesses you have assembled will help us peer behind one of the last vestiges of the Iron Curtain that Josef Stalin and his collaborators drew across the world after World War II. The North Korean regime is brutal, totalitarian, and veiled in secrecy. It is time to lift the veil.

I want to welcome the distinguished journalist and Asian expert, Jasper Becker, who, until very recently, was the Beijing bureau chief of the *South China Morning Post*. In light of the career change forced upon him on Monday, I look forward to any additional comments he would like to make regarding the problem of "self-imposed censorship" by journalists working in Beijing.

We also have a distinguished panel of representatives from international aid agencies and NGOs. They will help to clarify issues with regard to humanitarian relief efforts and the monitoring of the distribution of food aid. This is a key concern for the Congress since North Korea has been the number one recipient of U.S. food assistance in Asia for some years. I agree with President Reagan that "a hungry child knows no politics," and am proud that our food assistance has saved the lives of millions of vulnerable Koreans. On the other hand, the admonition to "love your enemies" does not, in my view, include putting rice in the bellies of a hostile North Korean army which threatens our friends in South Korea and the thirty-seven thousand American troops who stand with them.

The second panel, made up of defectors and those who survived the North Korean gulag, will, I fear, provide chilling testimony. They will speak from personal experience of the human rights abuses that the Pyongyang regime commits against its own people. Two of them will recount their experiences inside North Korea's horrific concentration camps for political prisoners. These are places where unjustly imprisoned Koreans face daily abuse, torture, and summary execution at the whim of their tormentors; where mothers and fathers are starved because they stole a few kernels of corn to feed their own starving children; where Christians are martyred because of the strength of their religious faith; where pregnant women are classified as enemies of the state and forced to watch in horror as their newborns are murdered before their eyes.

North Korea is a place so feared by the thousands of refugees on the run that they have chosen a homeless existence where they are subject to exploitation, trafficking, and sexual abuse. Most of all, these refugees fear the threat of forced repatriation to the dark, murky gulag from which they escaped at great personal risk. Some are so desperate that they threaten suicide rather than return to what they call a "hell on earth."

One might think these accounts are exaggerated. Too horrifying to be true, others may say. But I am old enough to remember the Second World War. As a veteran of that noble conflict, I remember a lot of things that weren't supposed to happen. I also recall those who said we couldn't know what was taking place within foreign borders half a world away.

I, however, know full well what unscrupulous regimes with a lust for power are capable of: Pearl Harbor. The rape of Nanking. Concentration camps. The Holocaust.

And so we promised "never again." Yet how many times have those words rung hollow since the end of World War II? I fear that we may one day be indicted by our silence about the enormous human rights abuses going on today in North Korea,

even as we speak. And the refugee issue, long wrapped in silence, has now reached inside the very gates of the American embassy in Beijing. It is time to hear the testimony of these witnesses.

Our President took a lot of public criticism from the so-called “experts” when he identified North Korea as part of an “axis of evil.” But the experts who claim they know history should remember that George W. Bush was not the first American president who saw evil in the North Korean regime.

No. Harry Truman was the first. President Truman faced an excruciating decision when Pyongyang launched a sudden, unprovoked attack on a Sunday morning in June, 1950. He either had to acquiesce in the extension of the Iron Curtain over the entire Korean peninsula or come to the immediate rescue of those in the south.

Truman knew the cost involved. It was a cost paid with the blood of almost fifty-five thousand heroic young American military personnel, not to mention the soldiers of allied nations under the U.N. command, and the millions of Korean casualties.

Was President Truman right to perceive evil in the North Korean regime? I think today's testimony will make clear that he was. We can all be thankful that our friends and allies in South Korea were not subjected to a half-century of the ghastly repression of which we are about to hear.

I look forward to receiving the testimony of our witnesses.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE EARL BLUMENAUER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

I want to congratulate Chairman Leach and Ranking Member Faleomavaega for holding a hearing on these important issues today. We are all heartened at the recently announced news that dialogue will resume between North Korea and the US. Since the beginning of the Bush administration, there has been a long silence regarding US policy toward the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) and a resulting lack of engagement, furthering the isolation of North Korea. As is now well agreed, North Korea experienced a devastating famine which peaked in 1996–97 and resulted in the deaths of nearly two million according to some estimates. And the suffering for the people of North Korea continues in a country that still cannot feed its people and by all accounts, a country that routinely abuses the human rights of its citizens. As a nation, the US is faced with some troubling real world choices about how best to address these issues.

The DPRK has long been isolated from the rest of world, operating in its hermit kingdom. I strongly believe that engagement is a critical approach for bringing North Korea into the world community and help end the severe isolation of its citizens. As most experts both here in the US and throughout Asia agree, we want to avoid if possible a sudden collapse of the regime that could plunge its citizens into further chaos, suffering and destruction.

In his book, *The Great North Korean Famine*, Andrew Natsios, now the USAID Administrator, notes that the greatest benefits of the international food donations during the late nineties included a flooding of food into the burgeoning private farmer markets. This influx of food kept the food prices low and therefore fed far more average North Koreans citizens that otherwise would have occurred. At the same time people knew the food was coming from outside the country, so it further undermined the system as citizens realized the state was no longer able to provide for their needs.

Natsios also notes the significant impact of more than 100 NGO and UN aid workers as they fanned out across the country for the first time in fifty years, chiseling away at the extreme isolation of the people in North Korea and chipping away at the illusions of the *juche* ideology.

Another important issue for our consideration is that there continues to be an urgent need for additional food aid in North Korea to avert a severe food crisis. In an April 12, 2002 news release, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) urged the international community to give desperately needed food aid to the vulnerable people in the DPRK. Some 6.4 million beneficiaries will be affected unless new contributions to the emergency operation are made now. The WFP Regional Director for Asia has just completed a two-week countrywide assessment and concludes that a break in the food aid pipeline would disrupt WFP's efforts to alleviate hunger and reduce malnutrition among the at-risk population groups (children, pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly). The most vulnerable will have dramatically reduced rations by August under current funding levels. An additional 368,000 tons of cereals and other commodities are urgently needed to help stave off a major food crisis.

I would hope we can continue fulfilling our moral imperative of providing food to the North Koreans. I applaud the Bush Administration's pledge to uphold the dictum of Ronald Reagan that a hungry child knows no politics, and hope that translates into additional food for North Korea with US food monitors who can continue the process of ending the isolation of North Korea.

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DON'T LET NORTH KOREAN SOFTENING OBSCURE PERSISTENT HUNGER

BY ROBERTA COHEN ¹

There's been encouraging news of late from the Korean Peninsula. Leaders of the North and South held a first summit in June, and family reunions and cultural programs are under way. North Korea is establishing diplomatic relations with other Asian and Western countries and is negotiating with the US about freezing its nuclear-weapons and ballistic-missile programs.

Despite the fact that the US has provided North Korea with more than \$ 400 million in food and other commodities since 1995, there are still no firm assurances the food is reaching those who need it most. Congressional and nongovernmental-organization (NGO) estimates suggest upward of 2 million North Koreans died from starvation and related diseases between 1994 and 1998. A major reason is that the food aid goes directly to North Korean authorities, with no controls to prevent their handing it out to party officials and their families, the military, people considered loyal, and workers deemed essential, to the detriment of others.

To survive, tens of thousands have illegally crossed into China in search of food and shelter from China's Korean communities. But the majority don't make it across the border. New, unpublished reports from aid organizations and researchers working on the border suggest many become internally displaced within North Korea, moving from village to village, or from urban to rural areas, foraging for food. Growing numbers of malnourished children separated from their families roam city marketplaces and train stations, scavenging. Since the North Koreans restrict internal travel, those caught outside home areas without permits are subject to beatings, arrest, and confinement in centers specifically created for people who "wander" in search of food. Border groups describe conditions in these centers as "grim at best, with limited food, heating, and medical care." Although the government claims to feed people in these camps, disease and death rates are reportedly high, and international monitors aren't allowed inside.

The worst period of the famine appears to have peaked, but large pockets of hunger and starvation remain. Some international aid officials insist the bulk of the food they provide is reaching those in need.

But the US General Accounting Office reports that the North Korean government doesn't allow the World Food Program (the main conduit for US aid) sufficient access to ensure food is "shipped, stored or used as planned." Leading NGOs, including Action Against Hunger, Oxfam, and Nobel-prize-winning Mdecins Sans Frontires (Doctors Without Borders), have left North Korea in protest of government restrictions.

North Korea is not able to produce the 4.7 million tons of food it needs each year to feed its people. Only 20 percent of its land is arable, it lacks the machinery, fertilizer, and infrastructure to improve its agricultural output, and it is shackled with a Stalinist agricultural system. This means that the US and others will very likely have to continue providing food aid for some years to come. If that's the case, it's time to make sure US aid actually reaches the people who need it most.

Right now the World Food Program is negotiating its latest food-aid agreement with North Korea. The US should insist upon:

- an accurate survey of food needs throughout North Korea.
- an independent monitoring system for food distribution with uncontrolled, random access to all vulnerable groups - internally displaced persons, those in camps, and children suffering malnutrition and related diseases in hospitals and orphanages.
- the provision by North Korea of lists of the actual institutions to which food and medical aid is going;

¹ Roberta Cohen is codirector of the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement.

- permission for NGOs to set up feeding stations accessible to hungry North Koreans.
- an expanded presence for relief workers in the country.
- and agricultural reforms to address the famine - such as increasing the number of individual plots of land on which people can grow their own food.

Persuading the North Koreans to allow these steps won't be easy.

Chances of success will be far better if the US mobilizes other donors, and other democratically based countries with which North Korea now has ties, to join in insisting that food go to the truly needy.

Excerpts from:

MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN THE DPRK: A SURVEY OF
HUMANITARIAN AGENCY INVOLVEMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

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December 2001

Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the humanitarian situation in the DPRK—by assessing humanitarian needs and the response to date from the international humanitarian community. Secondly, it presents a summary and evaluation of the various views within the humanitarian community in respect of the operating conditions for humanitarian activity within the country.

The major UN agencies—UNDP, UNICEF and WFP—started their relationship with the DPRK in the 1980s and some minor activities were undertaken in the country. These agencies became fully operational in the DPRK after 1995, when the DPRK government appealed to the international community for assistance to cope with gross food shortages, which threatened starvation for its people. The DPRK also appealed for assistance to NGOs, which started to take up residence in the DPRK in 1997, just four years ago. Prior to the mid-1990s, the DPRK had no experience of working with NGOs except for periodic links with the Red Cross and through its hosting of small delegations to the country of organisations such as the American Friends Service Committee.

The UN agencies and the NGOs had little knowledge of the DPRK and the DPRK government had no experience of dealing with the international humanitarian community. The norms, principles, rules and decision-making procedures of the DPRK were thus virtually unknown to the international humanitarian community. The DPRK government had a parallel lack of knowledge and understanding of the conventional requirements for international humanitarian assistance transfers.

Agency responses to working in the DPRK varied considerably. Responses varied according to a multiplicity of factors, including but not only related to type of agency and country of origin, type and nature of donor, and agency preferred method of working

There is a large area of agreement between the agencies as to the need for improved monitoring and assessment conditions. A small number of agencies have the view, expressed by MSF, that there is 'no humanitarian space whatsoever in the DPRK'. Another view expressed by some agencies is that the conditions demanded of the DPRK government are more stringent than in any other international humanitarian operation. The majority perspective, however, is that conditions need improving but that it is necessary to continue to engage with the DPRK. From this perspective, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the DPRK reports, in 2001, that 'Essentially, the minimum conditions are not yet achieved here, but we know that there is a very serious crisis that affects millions of people. We have no doubt that our aid has saved many, many lives. We do not have the luxury of choice that allows us to say "we will not operate because minimum conditions are not reached"—we have to remain engaged and persevere, and work towards achieving those conditions. The minimum conditions will certainly not be achieved if we all simply pull out.' (Morton, 2001)

1. Purpose of report

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD)—that brings together Heads of Humanitarian agencies including UN and NGOs—is organising a series of consultations on humanitarian dilemmas. One of these consultations was held on December 6, 2001 in Geneva and the topic was—‘Minimum conditions for humanitarian action’.

The CHD workshop looked in detail at the case of DPRK. The purpose of this report is twofold. Firstly, it provides a brief overview of the humanitarian situation in the DPRK—by assessing humanitarian needs and the response to date from the international humanitarian community. Secondly, it presents a summary and evaluation of the various views within the humanitarian community in respect of the operating conditions for humanitarian activity within the country.

2. Methodology

The bulk of the report was based upon documentation from the consultant’s own papers, electronic resources such as the Reliefweb archives and responses from to an email communication sent to a number of organisations and individuals located through the net, personal sources and available relevant email lists. This method involved somewhat of a scattershot approach but—in the absence of an available master-list of humanitarian organisations operating or having operated in the DPRK—the aim was to try to ensure that as many interested parties as possible would have the opportunity to contribute their views.

A wide range of persons and agencies responded to the email communication. I have not listed them all here but they included government departments, NGOs, UN agencies, persons that had worked in the DPRK or that were still working in the DPRK, and media representatives. Many apologies are offered to those that were inadvertently missed out.

Few external observers are aware of the sheer immensity and diversity of the humanitarian effort and so some attempt has been made to map the humanitarian presence in the DPRK. The wide variety of organisations also helps to explain the wide variety of perspectives on humanitarian involvement in the DPRK. This is why it is difficult to present an ‘aggregate’ view of the humanitarian community’s views on this subject. Some common positions can, however, be observed and, where they do exist, are outlined in this paper.

3. Constraints

The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), formerly known as the UN Department of Humanitarian assistance, maintains useful records on assistance to the DPRK but it is wholly reliant on what figures are reported to it. Some agencies have preferred to enter into bilateral arrangements with the DPRK and it is likely that these donations are not well-recorded. There have, however, been some improvements in transparency. Since the North-South Korean Summit of 2000, for instance, assistance provided by south Korean and Japanese NGOs is less of a sensitive issue for those NGOs and so this assistance is becoming increasingly more visible. It is not possible, therefore, to provide a comprehensive historical account of what assistance has been channelled to the DPRK since 1995. It is also doubtful whether even today it is possible to identify with much precision how much assistance is going to which beneficiaries, unless that assistance is channelled through the mechanisms of the UN Common Humanitarian Appeal Plan.

Other constraints were that for those organisations operating in the DPRK, or contemplating operating in the DPRK in the future, the subject of ‘minimum conditions for humanitarian involvement’ remains extremely sensitive. Agencies may judge that it is not necessarily helpful to engage in discussions of this issue outside of their own bilateral negotiations with the DPRK government. This also means that there is a potentially disproportionate voice for those organisations that have chosen no longer to work in the DPRK.

4. A summary of humanitarian involvement in the DPRK

The major UN agencies—UNDP, UNICEF and WFP—started their relationship with the DPRK in the 1980s and some minor activities were undertaken in the country. These agencies became fully operational in the DPRK after 1995, when the DPRK government appealed to the international community for assistance to cope with gross food shortages, which threatened starvation for its people. The DPRK also appealed for assistance to NGOs, which started to take up residence in the DPRK in 1997, just four years ago. Prior to 1997, the DPRK had no experience of working with NGOs except for periodic links with the Red Cross and through its hosting of small delegations to the country of organisations such as the American Friends Service Committee.

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In 1998, in an attempt to clarify with the government what the humanitarian agencies viewed as appropriate and essential principles for humanitarian operations in the DPRK, humanitarian agencies issued a collective set of 'Humanitarian principles.' These were initially worked out with DPRK officials and were first issued in November 1998 and amended April 1999 and March 2001. Humanitarian agencies have also issued three consensus statements on humanitarian operations in the country. The Humanitarian Principles with a list of the signatories are reproduced in appendix one. The Consensus Statements, also with lists of signatories, are reproduced in Appendix two.

The Humanitarian principles are monitored through a series of 'benchmarks' developed by the in-country humanitarian/development working group comprised of all the resident humanitarian agencies. Progress on the benchmarks is regularly recorded in reports on the implementation of the Common Humanitarian Assistance Plan, which is coordinated by the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which also has in-country representation. The most recent, October 2001, OCHA summary of progress on the Humanitarian principles is enclosed as appendix three.

5. *The Humanitarian situation*

Background

In the mid 1990s the DPRK suffered from a series of natural disasters that both destroyed food crops and exacerbated the structural economic decline, which had been taking place since at least the late 1980s, and which was a result of a loss of preferential trading arrangements with China and the former Soviet Union and Communist eastern Europe. Subsequent to the end of the Cold war, and the shift in the Chinese economy towards 'market socialism', former partners demanded hard currency payments for key Korean imports, most importantly oil. Lack of oil and other imported inputs contributed to massive shutdowns of industrial production. The DPRK also relied on industrial inputs (fertiliser, chemicals, electricity fed irrigation systems) to maintain agricultural output and a lack of these inputs contributed to dramatic falls in food production, such that by the early to mid-1990s the DPRK could not feed its population by its own production, and did not have the resources to purchase food from abroad. In addition, lack of locally produced inputs and the wherewithal to purchase them contributed to nation wide deterioration in the socio-economic infrastructure—including (although not confined to) the transport, energy, health, education and welfare sectors.

The DPRK government had initially responded to the growing crisis with various self-help initiatives that included encouraging innovation in the workplace, recycling of all used material, the cultivation of very marginal agricultural land, the organisation and support of population movement towards land where food could be obtained, and the ever more extensive use of human labour in place of equipment and machinery that was no longer available in the country. In 1995, the government was forced to appeal to the United Nations humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organisations for assistance because the scale of the crisis was such that it could not be resolved by self-help methods.

According to figures produced jointly by the government and the UNDP, GDP declined by about 50 per cent between 1993 and 1996—representing a drop in per capita income to \$481. Acute food shortages threatened the lives of millions, particularly the most vulnerable—children, women, the elderly, the sick. There were unsubstantiated rumours of starvation—unsubstantiated because it was impossible for independent observers to have access to the DPRK population. What was incontestable was that there were many 'excess deaths' due to malnutrition/disease related causes. The figures are still in contention with numbers cited at the lower and higher end closely allied to political agendas of the sources—from 200,000—the government's figure—to the three million cited by United States Republican Andrew Natsios—now director of USAID. Independent observers argue for a more variegated picture—with the industrial north-eastern province of North Hamgyong much more adversely affected by food shortages, for instance, compared to the breadbasket areas of North and South Hwanghae.

Current aggregate food needs

Since 1995, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has carried out, in conjunction with the government and the UN World Food Programme (WFP), bi-annual food and crop assessments to try to gauge the requirements for international assistance. The FAO/WFP surveys, compiled with the help of satellite data, government information, discussions with the humanitarian agencies and field visits have shown that annual food production is insufficient to meet needs. Annual cereal production has remained at a low level with a perceptible decline since the start of the FAO/WFP surveys in 1995. On the more positive side, the most recent crop assessment, of October 2001, indicates quite a sharp recovery of cereal production compared to the very difficult previous year, with some indication of structural improvements, although the report also indicates a continuing large aggregate food deficit (see Appendix four, table one).

Using a minimal food requirement (167 kg per person per year to provide 75 percent of a minimum calorie requirement of 2100 kcal.), FAO/WFP calculates that even with the efforts made by the government, supported by the international community, to rejuvenate agricultural production, there will be insufficient food to meet basic needs in the year 2000/2001 (see appendix four, table two). The FAO/WFP October 2001 assessment mission found that aggregate food deficits would continue into 2001/2002 and a grave food crisis can only be averted through continuing international assistance.

While no-one is sure about the accuracy of the numbers, humanitarian agencies, donors and government share the broad conclusions of the FAO/WFP surveys that indicate an aggregate need for food and other basic needs support, as well as for assistance to revive the economy so the country can both produce food and afford to buy food on international markets.

6. The humanitarian response

Since 1995 and the first international humanitarian responses to the crisis, the composition of the international humanitarian community in terms of the types of agencies (multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental) and their geographical provenance has been diverse. Methods of operation have been varied. Sectors of assistance have remained more or less the same.

There have been two main changes in the composition of the international humanitarian between 1995 and 2001. The first is the move from a negligible in-country humanitarian agency presence to a, relatively speaking, substantial residential presence, including governmental, multilateral and non-governmental agencies.

The second and related change is the start of work by non-governmental organisations in the DPRK. This NGOs differ according to geographical origin in terms of their method of operation. South Korean and Japanese NGOs are non-residential, United States NGOs have been mainly non-residential (with the partial exception of the presence of health and food aid monitors in-country in parts of 1998, 1999 and 2000). European NGOs have been mainly residential. (It is a condition of funding of the European Community's Humanitarian Office that there is a resident presence). So far the Canadian NGOs have operated as non-residents.

Initial response to the emergency came in the form of food aid and, although the types of assistance now cover more sectors, primarily agriculture and health, the most substantial sector of foreign assistance remains that of direct food aid.

The initial humanitarian response 1995–1997

The first international agencies to respond to DPRK appeals for assistance were those with an already established relationship with the DPRK—UN WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and FAO—along with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the Catholic-based NGO, CARITAS-Hong Kong. Less visible and less recorded, because of the political constraints, was the delivery of aid from Japanese and south Korean NGOs, which also began in 1994/1995. Korea Food for the Hungry International, for instance, sent medical equipment and clothes in 1994 and 1995. South Korean NGOS channelled their early assistance via their international links or US affiliates. In 1996, for example, World Vision Korea, channelled food through World Vision International and the Association of Evangelism in Korea donated rice through the Eugene Bell Foundation US.

WFP delivered just over 18 thousand MT of rice to a value of about \$4.5 million, excluding freight and monitoring costs between November 1995 and May 1996. UNICEF's initial response in 1995–1996 was the provision of around \$2 million worth of supplementary food for young children, measles immunisation, oral rehydration salts and multivitamin tablets. The IFRC appealed for 26 million Swiss francs in three appeals dated September 1995, March 1996 and November 1996. It is unclear from the records available how much funding was actually raised for the

IFRC appeal, although a variety of food aid was donated including 22MT of cereals along with non-food items such as winter clothing. CARITAS mobilised five and a half million dollars in its first year of assistance, 1995/1996, allocating four and a half million dollars to food aid, about half a million dollars to support of agriculture and the rest to support in various social sectors including education.

International agency activity increased in 1996/1997. Further support to the DPRK came from Swiss government bilateral assistance in agriculture, agricultural missions by MSF, and, also in the agricultural sector, from Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), World Vision International, Mercy Corps, Action for Churches Together (ACT) and Food for the Hungry. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) sent assessment missions.

Resident humanitarian agencies

From 1995, UN resident missions were consolidated and expanded and shifted in focus from non-residential to residential operations. Key agencies were UNDP, the 'oldest' of the resident agencies, having established an office in 1980, WFP which established an office in November 1995, UNICEF in January 1996 and World Health Organisation (WHO) in late 1997.

In 1997 the NGO presence was firmly established when the IFRC set up an office in Pyongyang in 1997 and six non-governmental agencies began operating as residents in the DPRK. These were Children's Aid Direct (CAD), Concern Worldwide, Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI), Deutsche Welthungerhilfe—known in English as German Agro Action (GAA), Medecins du Monde (MDM) and Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF). These NGOs were followed in 1998 by Action Against Hunger that took up residence in the DPRK, as did Help Age International, Oxfam and Cap Anamur.

In July 1997, the Swiss Disaster Relief Unit (SDR) opened an office in Pyongyang, followed in August by the European Commission, which established an office with six international staff members (four from the Commission's Food Security Unit and two from ECHO).

UN agencies in DPRK have expanded their presence since 1995 with, by 2001, in-country international representation from the UN Family Planning Association, a national officer employed by FAO in country, and regular visiting missions from smaller UN agencies, for example, the World Tourism Organisation.

The resident NGO community

The NGO community has fluctuated in number. Five have left and six have arrived. Since 1997, additions to the resident NGO community have been Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA)—Switzerland, PMU Interlife (Sweden), Campus fur Christus (Switzerland) and in 2000, two new French NGOs—Handicap International and Triangle. In 2001 Hungarian Baptist Aid took up residence.

Of the five resident agencies that decided to leave DPRK, two voiced concerns that they were not reaching the most vulnerable children and that the difficulties and constraints they faced prevented adequate assessment, monitoring and evaluation activities. One agency, Oxfam, was particularly concerned with constraints on adequate monitoring and assessment, not of beneficiaries, but of the water facilities it was testing.

The non-resident NGOs

At least four groups of non-resident NGOs have also assisted DPRK—none of these groups being mutually exclusive. Two groups (with overlapping membership) operate through a semi-resident presence in the DPRK. The first are those who coordinate their activities through the NGO funded Food Aid Liaison Unit (FALU) of the WFP. The second are those NGOs from the United States that have coordinated their activities through the Private Voluntary Organisation Consortium (PVOC). A third group operates through sister NGOs—some of which are resident in the DPRK and some of which are not. A fourth group operates bilaterally, directly with the DPRK government, and includes south Korean, Japanese and United States based NGOs.

FALU was set up in 1997 by CARITAS, CFGB, ACT/Church World Service, World Vision International (WVI), ADRA, Food for the Hungry and Mercy Corps. In 2001, current members are CARITAS, CFGB, ACT and WVI. FALU employs one DPRK based international officer and two national officers who undertake monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities on behalf of its constituent NGOs.

The PVOC was established in 1997 and was comprised of ADRA, Amigos Internacionales, CARE, Catholic Relief Service, Church World Service, Korean-American Sharing Movement, Latter Day Saints Charities, Mercy Corps International and World Vision. PVOC monitors were based in DPRK in 1998, with

UNICEF, and in 1999–2000 with WFP. Three Korean speakers were employed in a team whose numbers changed but comprised around eight people. The PVOC team exited the country when the potato seed project and the Food For Work activities, which its member NGOs had supported, came to an end in 2000.

The third group of NGOS—mainly of US origin—work with international counterparts. These include the American Red Cross who work through the IFRC and Catholic Relief Services who work closely with CARITAS-Hong Kong. US agencies like the Eugene Bell Foundation and the Institute on Strategic Reconciliation work closely with south Korean counterparts as well as the DPRK authorities.

Some non-resident NGOs choose to work bilaterally. These include Americares, the American Friends Service Committee and Mercy Corps (in addition to its work within the PVOC).

Japanese NGOS, which have been assisting the DPRK since 1995 have tended to work closely with the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, a long-established organisation with extremely close ties to the DPRK government. These include the Association to send eggs and bananas to the children of the DPRK, CARITAS-Japan, the Relief Campaign Committee for Children and the National Christian Council in Japan.

South Korean NGOs have also assisted the DPRK and their numbers and activities have grown since they first started work in late 1995. Agencies include the Korean Sharing Movement, Iussaran Association, World Vision, Join Together Society, the Korean People's Welfare Foundation. In June 2001, 26 south Korean NGOs were donating humanitarian assistance to the DPRK.

Of the non-resident NGOs, two US based NGOS have decided that they will no longer operate in the DPRK, citing operational constraints including the inability to conduct adequate assessment, monitoring and evaluation activities. These are CARE and Catholic Relief Service (CRS). In contrast, south Korean NGOs have tried to encourage a greater participation from international non-governmental agencies in the DPRK.

Changing volumes and types of assistance

The first UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal ran from 1 July 1996 to 30 March 97 and by February 1997. The appeal was for \$43.6 million and was just under 60 per cent funded (no final year figures available). Only UN agencies participated in this first appeal. Funding, even at this early stage came from a wide variety of agencies. Appendix five indicates the food aid recorded by the UN system for DPRK for 1995/1996 and shows large bilateral donations from Japan (over \$60 million), Syria (over \$8 million) and Switzerland (\$2.5 million) through Swiss Disaster Relief. It also shows large NGO donations from CARITAS (around two and a half million dollars) and the IFRC (about two million dollars).

The second consolidated appeal, involving again only UN agencies was for US\$ 126,226,177 for the period from 1 April 1997 to 31 March 1998. In July 1997, the total requirement was increased to US\$184 million. Some US\$158 million was raised—an over 80 per cent response rate. The third appeal, which ran from 1 January 1998 through 31 December 1998 was for US\$415,648,979—of which US\$ 345,801,900 (or 90 per cent) was for food assistance. Although only about 57% of the appeal was funded—the entire cereal component of the appeal was received. The fourth appeal was for 1999 and the amount requested was US\$ 376,112,894—of which about 89 per cent, or approximately US\$ 243 million, was for food assistance and the promotion of food security. Again just over 50 per cent was funded—but WFP received over 100 per cent of its appeal. The fifth appeal, for the year 2000, was for US\$ 331,706,092 with about 92 per cent, or approximately US\$ 303.6 million, for food assistance and the promotion of food security. Again, overall the appeal in overall terms was funded to just over 50 per cent of requirements, but food aid through WFP reached almost full funding.

The most recent appeal, for 2001, was for \$383, 984,914—with all but about \$60 million designed for WFP food aid.

Key donors in the most recent appeals have been Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States. Table one indicates the key donors to the UN Common Appeal. Table two indicates the key donors from all sources (given the reported information).

Table one: Humanitarian Assistance in Response to the 2000 UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Democratic People's Republic of Korea

January–December 2000

Donor	Value US\$	% of Funding
1. Japan	95,657,289	62.48%
2. USA	29,228,497	19.09%
3. Australia	6,662,379	4.35%
4. EU	4,784,131	3.12%
5. Italy	3,224,355	2.11%
6. Sweden	2,799,278	1.83%
7. Norway	2,293,562	1.50%
8. Canada	1,710,526	1.12%
9. Denmark	1,511,486	0.99%
10. Finland	1,132,934	0.74%
Others*	4,099,456	2.68%
TOTAL	153,103,893	100.00%

Table two: Humanitarian Assistance in Response to the 2000 UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Democratic People's Republic of Korea

January–December 2000

Donor	Value US\$	% of Funding
1. Japan	95,657,289	42.76%
2. ROK	53,809,287	24.05%
3. USA	29,228,497	13.06%
4. Australia	6,992,132	3.13%
5. EU	5,003,391	2.24%
6. Canada	3,830,733	1.71%
7. Sweden	3,428,506	1.53%
8. Italy	3,224,355	1.44%
9. Norway	2,314,867	1.03%
10. Denmark	2,093,259	0.94%
Others*	18,144,097	8.11%
TOTAL**	223,726,413	100.00%

*Others includes Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, UN Agency, UNICEF National Committee, Multilateral, IFRC and NGOs

**Total Humanitarian Assistance calculated as follows—Contributions in direct response to the 2000 Appeal plus additional contributions outside of the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal framework (i.e. IFRC, ICRC, NGOs, Bilateral, etc.)

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2001

The first appeal focused on food aid, recovery of arable land and health. Food aid, food security and health were the key components of the second UN appeal with water and sanitation added to the list in the third appeal. These sectors remained key throughout the appeals with some emphasis shifting towards capacity-building and to dove-tailing humanitarian assistance with the UNDP/DPRK government Agricultural recovery and Environmental protection (AREP) plan, which was formulated and agreed with donors in 1998 and reviewed in 2000.

Food aid has remained overwhelmingly dominant in both volume and type of assistance donated to the DPRK since 1995. In addition, the UN World Food Programme has remained by far the most important channel of international humanitarian assistance to the country. The numbers of international staff resident in country illustrates this. In 2001 UN WFP has authorisation for 56 international staff. The nearest in number is UNICEF with 10. The relative volume of assistance being handled by the international agencies is also illustrated by the appeal summaries for 2001 in the table below.

Table three: Appeal for assistance for DPRK for 1 January 2001
to 31 December 2001

Appealing Agency, Requirements (US\$)

Food and Agriculture Organization/	
United Nations Development Programme	40,049,304
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	1,301,275
United Nations Children's Fund	10,502,940
United Nations Population Fund	750,000
World Food Programme	315,920,424
World Health Organization	8,350,280
Non-Governmental Organisations	7,110,691
Grand Total	383,984,914

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),
United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Democratic People's
Republic of Korea, 2001, undated

Non CAP assistance is, by definition harder to account for as not all is reported to the UN coordination office. For the year 2000, however, OCHA estimated that about \$70 million worth of assistance had arrived in DPRK—mainly from the Republic of Korea. South Korea's Ministry of Unification reports that between 1995 and 2001, US\$523 of relief good including food, fertiliser and medical supplies, had been provided from the Republic of Korea (south Korea).

Coordination

The need for agency coordination and cooperation was recognised by the humanitarian agencies from the beginning of the emergency operations. In-country coordination has evolved to incorporate resident agencies and visiting delegations from non-resident humanitarian agencies. Out of country mechanisms have been more diverse, reflecting differing interests and operating procedures of the very disparate types of agencies that have become involved with the DPRK between 1995 and 2001.

UNDP provided initial in-country coordination and, in February 1997, appointed an emergency rehabilitation officer for his purpose. WFP took more of a lead role in 1998 when the WFP Representative was appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator. In 1999 the WFP Representative also became UNDP Representative and UN Resident Representative. A weekly inter-agency meeting takes place in Pyongyang and regular inter-sectoral meetings in agriculture, health and nutrition, food aid coordination and water and sanitation are also convened. A humanitarian working group, comprising representatives from all the agencies meets regularly to monitor the appeal. The UN country team meets regularly as do the NGOs.

Out of country organisation has taken place through country wide coordination as in the US and Japan, through Church based mechanisms as with the CARITAS network, and through various innovative mechanisms such as the three annual conferences on humanitarian assistance to the DPRK which have taken place in Beijing (1999), Tokyo (2000) and Seoul (2001).

Complexity and change

The humanitarian community is a very diverse, particularly in the NGO community. The UN agencies provide the vast majority of humanitarian assistance and the delivery of UN assistance is in turn dominated by WFP. There has been a shifting emphasis towards food security and health and an increasing willingness to attempt to support rehabilitation and recovery. In humanitarian assistance volume terms, however, food aid remains by far the dominant sector. All programmes, including food aid are cross cut by capacity building programmes—for example including study tours abroad—and all UN programmes and some of the NGO programmes promote conscious gender sensitivity in their programmes. CARITAS and IFRC remain large providers of NGO assistance although, collectively, south Korean NGOs have an increasing presence (though not residence) in the country.

7. The conditions for humanitarian assistance

A background of mutual incomprehension

The DPRK is probably the most closed society in the world and prior to the food emergency of the 1990s very little reliable information was available about the country. The government viewed all data through a national security prism which considered that even basic micro socio-economic statistics could be useful to its adversaries. The agencies thus had a double handicap. The first was that they had no

basic information other than that provided by government or that could be gleaned from the rare publication that had attempted to offer some objective analysis of the country from the little data available. The second was that requests for what was seen by the agencies as standard baseline data were often seen by the government as unnecessarily intrusive, and as seeming to ask for information which could be made available to enemy states. Principles of transparency and accountability demanded by agencies were therefore antithetical to the operating of the state.

The DPRK had never worked extensively with humanitarian or development organisations and not at all with NGOs and had no knowledge of standard operating procedures of humanitarian agencies. Conversely, humanitarian agencies had little or no knowledge of the DPRK and humanitarian workers had to train themselves in the culture, politics and society of the DPRK as best they could.

Humanitarian agency concerns

From early 1997, NGOs in particular, but also the key UN agencies of WFP and UNICEF, began to express concerns that they were not permitted unimpeded access to beneficiaries to assess need and impact of assistance, and to monitor the distribution of aid. Agencies were also concerned with the reliability and quality of information they received from government.

The substantive concerns of many humanitarian agencies focused on two related areas—whether aid was reaching the most vulnerable of the population—and the restrictions on direct access to beneficiary or potential beneficiary groups. Not all the agencies voiced these concerns and the agencies that have voiced these concerns have not shared them to the same degree. There has, however, been a shifting consensus on these issues by many agencies, made public in the three consensus statements outlined in Appendix two. The most recent consensus statement of March 2001 concentrates on the progress that has been made but also comments that more need to be done.

Humanitarian principles

In response to the concerns expressed, humanitarian agencies developed a set of humanitarian principles in November 1998, which have since been amended, in April 1999 and March 2001 (see Appendix one).

The nine humanitarian principles express broad areas in which the agencies wish to see progress and serve as a baseline for individual and collective agency negotiations with government. A set of indicators has been developed by OCHA in order to record, in detail, achievements and constraints in respect to the progressive implementation of the humanitarian principles. These are regularly updated (see Appendix three for most recent report of October 2001). The most recent report shows gradual improvements in some areas, continuing constraints in others and some deterioration in one area.

8. Agency responses to conditions for humanitarian operations in the DPRK

Agency responses to working in the DPRK varied considerably. Responses varied according to a multiplicity of factors, including but not only related to type of agency and country of origin, type and nature of donor, and agency preferred method of working. In so far as generalisations can be made about such a range of agencies, some attempt is made to group responses below. Individual agency responses are also outlined to illustrate the range of views. Some emphasis has been placed on the European NGO response because of the publicity some of these organisations have generated, not because they are the most substantial providers of assistance to the DPRK.

South Korean and Japanese NGOs

South Korean and Japanese agencies consider that they are responding to humanitarian need and at the same time are contributing to the peace process on the Korean peninsula. South Korean and Japanese agencies state that they are responding to a demonstrated overwhelming need for emergency assistance—and there is less emphasis upon detailed in-country monitoring of distribution and the necessity for rigorous assessment of impact on individuals and beneficiary groups. Some South Korean NGOs working in the agricultural sector, however, have had access to continued follow-up on projects and dialogue with counterparts in the Ministry of Agriculture, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, county officials and farm management committees such as to permit assessment and evaluation of assistance.

Of the 8000 south Koreans who visited the DPRK in 2000/2001, many were involved in humanitarian support to the DPRK. Obvious advantages arise to south Korean counterparts because of language facility, although one negative aspect is that it is difficult for south Koreans to travel outside Pyongyang. South Korean and Japanese agencies have more or less accepted that it is impossible to have a resi-

dent presence until political agreements are found between their governments and the DPRK government. Some of these work bilaterally and some coordinate with the multilateral agencies.

US NGOs

United States NGOs have stated that they are responding to humanitarian need although there has been widespread discussion in and out of humanitarian circles in the United States of the idea that US provided humanitarian assistance can also contribute to improving the general atmosphere of relations between the DPRK and the US. US NGOS, through the PVOC, had resident monitors for lengthy periods of time in 1998, 1999 and 2000. In 1998 and 1999 these monitors stayed in hotels where other international visitors stayed but in 2000 US monitors had to stay in a government guest house separate from the rest of the international community. The US NGOS were permitted to employ Korean speakers. Travel plans for monitoring were approved a week in advance but once on site, according to a US government paper researched and published by the US General Accounting Office (June 2000), on the spot visits to projects, distribution centres, project participants and homes were normally permitted.

The PVOC responded to the concern of having to give one week's notice of visits by increasing the number of monitoring activities, reporting to the GAO that their monitoring activities exceeded those in other countries. (GAO, June 2000) While the PVOC was in-country it continued to negotiate with the DPRK government on ways of improving access, having more security over visas, and to try to improve the ability of the PVOC to conduct needs assessments.

In 2000 at the close of the PVOC programme, one PVOC agency, CARE, decided to withdraw from the Consortium. It stated the food crisis was not as severe as previously and would have chosen to work in rehabilitation efforts except that, 'Despite a nearly four-year dialogue with the North Korean government regarding the importance of access, transparency and accountability . . . the operational environment in North Korea has not progressed to a point where CARE feels it is possible to implement effective rehabilitation programs. For that reason, CARE will withdraw from the consortium by June 30, 2000'.

Other agencies continue to work bilaterally with the DPRK—for instance Mercy Corps and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)—which are both involved in the agricultural sector.

AFSC monitors its assistance by making visits to farms two or three times a year with the intention of building trust through direct contact with farm managers. AFSC notes that relationships with Korean counterparts have developed and grown over time in a positive manner. AFSC also records this as the experience of other NGOs working in DPRK over a long period of time.

ACT remarks that 'the minimum conditions for humanitarian aid should always be based in the Code of Conduct' [for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and NGOs] (email to author).

Other NGOs work through international affiliates, which take the lead in monitoring and evaluation activities. These include the American Red Cross and the United Methodist Committee for Relief Work UMCOR). UMCOR remarks that: 'we do not have a policy, or a standard that we've established to measure situations against. Our giving to the DPRK is pushed mainly by donors (as is most of our giving).' (email to author)

US NGOs have also received some criticism for poor management of programmes and failure to respond to DPRK willingness to actively engage in monitoring and evaluation of seed potato production at eight farms. (See GAO, 2000) The DPRK government also had some difficulty in discerning why the donated food for Food for Work programmes from the US government was channelled through the PVOC when the vast majority of US assistance was channelled through the UN WFP. In this respect, DPRK representatives were reported as saying that they accepted monitoring for the sake of food assistance but were less happy with food assistance for the sake of monitoring.

European, Canadian and Australian agencies

There have been a wide variety of responses from European, Canadian and Australian agencies to concerns that humanitarian agencies are limited in their activities in the DPRK. Some agencies choose to continue to negotiate with the DPRK government and to try to build long-term relationships in order to facilitate cooperation. These include GAA, Children's Aid Direct, CESVI, Campus for Christus, Concern Worldwide, PMU Interlife. Cap Anamur was involved in a major conflict with the government when its Director accused the government of human rights violations in December 2000—although the agency itself decided to stay in the DPRK

and disavowed its outgoing country representative. ADRA Switzerland has sometimes had confrontational relations with the government but remains in the DPRK despite funding shortages for its DPRK programme.

Others including MSF, ACF and Oxfam have withdrawn from operating in the DPRK, citing restrictions on activities. MDM and Help Age International also withdrew. Funding difficulties were reported as contributing to the decisions of these latter two agencies to withdraw from the DPRK. Save the Children had also had a presence in the DPRK via seconded nutritionists to UNICEF but withdrew because they were concerned about the manner in which UNICEF distribution of high energy milk was taking place.

Canadian and Australian activity has been non-resident and these agencies have reported relatively good means of cooperation with the DPRK government.

Individual agency responses

Children's Aid Direct report that they support the Code of Conduct as a basis for working in the DPRK. They report an improvement in the conditions of humanitarian involvement in the DPRK. CAD reports that

'the minimum conditions for Humanitarian involvement in the DPRK as an evolving situation. We accept that to date these conditions have not fully been met, but we see a slow but continuing move towards meeting these conditions. Our levels of access, a fundamental issue, have increased during the time that we have worked in the DPRK, as has the level of co-operation we have received from the FDRC.'

German Agro Action, in a paper reviewing European NGO activity in the DPRK between 1995 and 2000, also noted, that while conditions were difficult, in terms of access to reliable information and having access to target groups for monitoring and evaluation, there had been noticeable improvements over the period. Freedom of movement had increased and, compared to 1997 [the first year of GAA residence] 'a definite positive difference for our work can be noted'. The GAA paper went on to say that

'confidence that has been carefully built up by all sides involved through the years is an asset too valuable to be given up even in times of difficulties of finding funds for innovative approaches' (Von Ramdohr, 2000).

Speaking on behalf of Concern Worldwide, CAD and GAA to an international conference of NGOs working in the DPRK in 2000, CAD emphasised that 'it is easier to leave than to stay on—stating that: 'we have a presence on the ground and are learning and understanding ourselves the system and culture that people we work with live in. We accept the constraints but we are also looking for ways to overcome them. difficulties can be worked through and we need to continue to work along the path of mutual understanding and co-operation' (Sirrell, 2000).

MSF operated in the DPRK from 1995, becoming resident from July 1997 and leaving in September 1998. MSF was concerned that it was not reaching the most vulnerable children and was not able to conduct a nutritional survey in the counties in which it worked (Pecchio, 1998). The current MSF position is that there is 'no humanitarian space whatsoever' for work in the DPRK. MSF currently is doing some work with Korean refugees inside China along the China/DPRK border and also looking at the work of the humanitarian agencies which continue to work in the DPRK. (Terry, November 2001) From their interviews with DPRK citizens in China, MSF is concerned that international food assistance is not reaching any of the vulnerable in the northern province of North Hamgyong. (Terry, November 2001) MSF commented that it is difficult for them to assess change in the conditions of working within the DPRK because they have not worked in the country for over three years. In September 1998, when MSF left the DPRK, they called for: 'all donor governments to review their aid policies towards DPRK to demand that it is more accountable and that the North Korean government ensures that humanitarian agencies can freely and impartially assess needs, deliver aid, have direct access to the population and assess the effectiveness of their programs'. (MSF, September 1998)

Action Against Hunger (ACF) worked in the DPRK for just over two years, from January 1998 to March 2000. They carried out nutritional support programmes and a water rehabilitation programme in North Hamgyong, a remote mountainous province with very little arable land and generally considered the worst off province in the country in terms of food and other shortages and in terms of the lack of coping strategies for most of the population. ACF also carried out support for cereal production in farms in Pyongan and South Hamgyong. During the period in residence ACF carried out detailed agricultural surveys on the farms in South Pyongyan, detailed

nutritional and attendance surveys in nurseries in North Hamgyong and a survey of water quality in North Hamgyong. Four personnel were based in a sub office in North Hamgyong. The nutritional support programme involved training Korean medical staff in 17 one-day courses in each county and district and North Hamgyong. (ACF, November 1999; ACF, February 2000 a)

ACF results showed that the incidence of malnutrition was not high in the nurseries and attendance was low compared to registered children. On the other hand malnutrition was high in the provincial residential children's institutions (babyhome and orphanages). This led ACF to be concerned about the existence of a group of children who were not attending children's institutions and were not therefore receiving international food. In order to reach these children ACF proposed the setting up soup kitchens in Chongjin, the provincial capital. The government agreed to this but did not agree to the monitoring protocol proposed by ACF. The ACF view of February 2000 is that information, particularly related to numbers of beneficiaries, could not be verified and food aid was/is not reaching the most vulnerable. They called for another international nutritional survey to be carried out, similar to that conducted in 1998. (ACF, February 2000, a, b, c)

Oxfam left the DPRK in December 1999, after a series of negotiations with the government on access to monitoring water quality. The Country Director of the Oxfam programme felt that the government finally had agreed to almost all that Oxfam had requested by the time Oxfam left the DPRK but their decision to allow access were too late to make a difference to the decision taken (author's interview with Oxfam country director, Pyongyang, December 1999).

The major Canadian humanitarian agency involved in the DPRK, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which has supplied assistance since 1996, argues that monitoring works relatively well in the DPRK and, finds that the quality of monitoring 'would exceed the average monitoring of CFGB program[s].' The lack of information to evaluate impact is more of a concern for CFGB in terms of not having available another nutrition survey similar to the one carried out in 1998. Although noting the inherent danger in comparisons to other operations, CFGB notes that 'the provision of humanitarian assistance is [a] messy business which requires the weighing of options between "less than ideal" approaches. in comparison with some other contexts, the concerns in the DPRK do not come close to the diversions and human rights violations of other contexts' (Frey, 2001).

Australia's NGO involvement with the DPRK is via the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. This agency funds training for DPRK scientists and administrators in Australia and programmes do not involve 'cash injections' into the DPRK. The agency reports that 'so far we are optimistic that the minimum conditions for assistance obtain'. (quotes from Brown, November 2001). The agency reports that: 'The most critical 'minimum condition' for us is a preparedness on the part of the DPRK to exchange agricultural research knowledge freely and to have unfettered access to all agreed sites, facilities, information, equipment and records pertaining to agreed agricultural R and D projects. So far we have plenty of positive indications that this will be achieved, and only one or two minor negative indications'. (Brown, 2001).

CARITAS and IFRC

CARITAS is a confederation of 154 Catholic based agencies and IFRC is a federation of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. Both fundraise through their constituent organisations and therefore represent international constituencies in their work in the DPRK. CARITAS considers that while operating conditions can be difficult in the DPRK, they are much improved since the start of their operations in 1995, and part of that improvement is due to the process of building up trust through continuous dialogue from both dialogue partners. CARITAS has experienced a good deal of flexibility on monitoring visits such as to be able to request and be granted variations from schedules in the field.

CARITAS-Germany would like to see more beneficiary input (Scholz, 2001). CARITAS-Hong Kong, the liaison agency for the CARITAS network, after six years of involvement with the DPRK argued strongly for continued engagement.

'Withholding aid would not only be morally wrong, it would also not solve any problems. Closing the door now means much greater difficulty in reopening it in the future—and with it the possibility of the same level of communication, or of gradually developing an even better [level of communication]. (Zellweger, 2000)

IFRC must also give one week's notice of visits. IFRC has not found any evidence of diversion of its supplies and has found evidence of efficient and effective distribution of drugs and equipment. The agency has recently completed a review of its activities within the DPRK which has not yet been made public but which includes an assessment of monitoring and assessment capabilities. IFRC appears to be of the

view that while the quality of information on different aspects of the programme varies, much of the information provided is usable, although some areas could be improved in both data collection and organisation, and monitoring.

Governmental agencies: bilateral and multilateral

The major bilateral agency operating in the DPRK is SDC—Swiss Development and cooperation agency and the main multilateral UN agencies operating in DPRK are WFP, UNICEF and UNDP.

SDC operates in specified farms and counties and engages in support for agricultural recovery including in the provision of training in and out of the country. Its full time international staff work with farmers, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Ministry of Agriculture and the FDRC. It has engaged in food distribution, most recently of frozen beef, and its monitors claim to have had exceptional access to institutions and beneficiaries.

WFP has developed an elaborate monitoring and assessment system based on the county as the unit of analysis. The new WFP county data base allows for systematic collection, organisation and comparison of population, agricultural, nutritional and gender based data—using qualitative as well as quantitative inputs from government, observations and interviews. The continuing problem here remains the accuracy of the data supplied.

WFP has five sub-offices which are more or less permanently staffed throughout the year and although monitoring visits still require a week's notice and are still sometimes cancelled without adequate explanation, some flexibility has been achieved in the ability of emergency officers in the field to vary schedules. Geographical access has increased to 168 counties out of 212, with the most recent becoming open in October 2001.

About 400 visits take place a month to county officials, children's institutions, hospitals, Food for Work sites and beneficiaries' homes. The quality of information from visits is variable. Many county officials and institution directors are keen to share information with international staff but there are also those who either offer minimal information or information which does not appear accurate. Very often the quality of the information correlates directly to the quality of relationship the international officer has developed over the months or years with the Korean counterparts with whom they are working. Generally conversations with beneficiaries appear less open than conversation with officials. This could be because family visits tend to involve up to seven or eight people being present with the beneficiary, the beneficiary is unlikely to have had any previous contact with foreigners and the gender dimensions are such (many adult beneficiaries are women) that it is inhibiting to talk to strangers about personal issues such as breast-feeding or nutrition habits. It could also be because they are prevented from responding freely by officials. WFP has also held a number of provincial workshops on nutrition and food for work procedures. These capacity building exercises are commended by Korean and international participants.

Conditions for staff in the field are still difficult, as they are for all agency staff. Outside Pyongyang, staff may not leave their accommodation unaccompanied. Visa restrictions and delays in visa processing also remains a problem for WFP.

WFP is involved in continuous negotiations with the government, almost on a daily basis, to try to reduce constraints to the humanitarian programme. The view of the WFP representative who is also Humanitarian Coordinator in DPRK is that: 'At the beginning, knowledge about the DPRK in general and of the humanitarian situation in particular, was extremely limited. Also, knowledge by the DPRK of international agencies and NGOs, and how they worked and raised resources, was also extremely limited. I believe that the dramatically increased knowledge that we have gained about the country, its situation, and our understanding of the reasons underlying the crisis are very valuable in itself, together with the increased understanding from the DPRK side, and the lessening of mutual suspicions. Our knowledge of the coping mechanisms and of the relative vulnerabilities of people in both geographic terms as well as urban/rural, has increased the effectiveness of our programmes.' (Morton, 2001)

UNICEF has noted 'significant improvements . . . in the partnership with the government' but still notes constraints including restricted movement and limited access to target population indirect access to counterparts, limited feedback on end-use of supplies, inadequate focus on skills development and lack of disaggregated data on children and women. (UNICEF, 2001)

Coordination

The agencies have attempted to share their experiences and, where possible co-ordinate their positions on the issue of the conditions for humanitarian work, since

the start of activity in the DPRK. This has taken place out of country and in country.

Out of country, in 1997 a widely attended meeting, organised by UNICEF with a position paper written by Save the Children was held in Geneva. The three international conferences organised by the NGOs working in DPRK, were widely attended, by UN agency representatives as well as by other interested parties.

In country, the mechanisms referred to above operate in relation to the inter-sectoral meetings and the inter-agency meetings take place weekly. Joint assessments of need and impact take place more regularly than previously, with agencies now also permitted to visit other agencies' projects.

Change

There is a large area of agreement between the agencies as to the need for improved monitoring and assessment conditions. The majority of those who continue to work in the DPRK and have worked there for some time note change in a positive direction. MSF, after having left the country in 1998, sees no room for improvement short of policy change which in practice would probably amount to a change of government. A number of agencies consider that the DPRK is expected to operate to a higher standard in terms of aid distribution, assessment and evaluation practices than most other governments where large scale assistance takes place.

Some features of monitoring and assessment conditions remain the same particularly in that travel is still organised one week in advance. One change is in terms of more access to more institutions. In 1998 for instance MSF was not permitted to see children in the orphanages in Pyongsong (Pecchio, 1998). In 2000/2001 the humanitarian agencies organised a working group that covered all the provincial institutions, including babyhomes, orphanages and boarding schools, collating and recording information from all the agencies.

Another change is in terms of the ability to collect, collate and disseminate information. In 1997/1998 MSF had signed a protocol with the government where they agreed not to share information collected with other agencies. Agencies in 2000/2001 regularly share information formally through the inter-sectoral working groups and informally through regular interaction.

The quality of information has also improved although it still needs to improve further. An international/national nutrition survey took place in 1998 and the government has recently agreed that another will take place in 2002. The newly established WFP information base provides a potentially invaluable tool for the whole international humanitarian community.

The major concern that is not yet addressed however is the inability to assess whether the most vulnerable groups in the country are receiving adequate assistance. 44 of the counties, which cover about 18% of the population are not accessible to the humanitarian community. In addition, children not attending nurseries or schools would not necessarily receive international assistance as food aid is channelled through children's institutions. There is still a concern shared by many agencies that unhealthy children observed in the country may not be receiving food through the international community aid distribution.

Most of the agencies would agree with ACF that malnutrition is not high in the children's institutions compared to 1997 when the agencies first entered the country. They would also agree that the worst cases of malnutrition are seen in the provincial residential children's institutions and these are being used as nutritional rehabilitation centres for children. This is why many of the agencies—governmental and NGOs—are concentrating activities in these institutions. The change in this respect is that resident agencies have continued to call for another nutritional survey, which the government has now agreed to.

In terms of the conditions for international staff, David Morton points out that there have been some improvements.

'Although there is a long way to go, we should recall that in 1995, the very few international staff were confined to the Koryo Hotel and field travel was undertaken by train. Nowadays we have over 100 UN and NGO staff, and WFP has five sub-offices outside Pyongyang, and staff are travelling by vehicle every day. (Morton, 2001)

9. Minimum conditions for humanitarian involvement

The minority view on whether conditions permit humanitarian operations in the DPRK is that expressed by MSF, that there is 'no humanitarian space whatsoever in the DPRK'. This view is explicitly critical of the majority view which is that conditions need improving but that they are gradually moving in the right direction. The majority view, implicitly critical of the minority view, is expressed by the Hu-

manitarian Coordinator when he argues that the process of continuing to try to engage with the DPRK is necessary.

Essentially, the minimum conditions are not yet achieved here, but we know that there is a very serious crisis that affects millions of people. We have no doubt that our aid has saved many, many lives. We do not have the luxury of choice that allows us to say “we will not operate because minimum conditions are not reached”—we have to remain engaged and persevere, and work towards achieving those conditions. The minimum conditions will certainly not be achieved if we all simply pull out.” (Morton, 2001)

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DPR KOREA: NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES—AN ESCALATING CRISIS?

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is WRITENET’s fourth report for UNHCR on refugee issues emanating from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (hereafter DPRK or North Korea).¹ Each is somewhat different in focus. The first, in 1996, was mainly a factual account of North Korean asylum seekers in neighbouring countries: mostly Russia, the People’s Republic of China (here referred to as PRC), and South Korea.² The second, by the present writer, offered a broad overview of North Korea’s current condition and prospects as of March 1999, with particular reference to implications for refugee flows—both actual and potential.³ The third, also by the present writer, was a shorter update as of September 2000; with particular emphasis on the improved international environment and peace process following the first ever inter-Korean summit meeting in June 2000.⁴ All these remain relevant, and are recommended for a fuller picture of the overall position than is possible here.

The present report is again mainly an update, prompted by two developments. Over the past six months the international climate has worsened, with North Korea using its mutual mistrust with the new Bush administration in the US as a pretext to break off official contacts with Seoul as well. A dark cloud has fallen on Kim Dae-jung’s “sunshine” policy, leaving the South Korean President politically beleaguered. The North’s new offer to resume talks may come too late to resurrect last year’s euphoria.⁵

In addition, awareness of North Korean refugee issues is rising. The incident of “Gilsu’s family”, who in June took refuge in UNHCR’s Beijing office in a successful bid to win onward passage to South Korea, focussed unprecedented publicity on an issue which hitherto had not had great exposure.⁶ All too predictably, it also prompted a crackdown by the Chinese authorities, lest this success should inspire imitators.⁷ But this in turn may provoke a backlash, at least in terms of heightened media attention.⁸ A revival of DPRK contract labour in Russia, of a kind that raised concerns in the past, has also been noted and criticized as akin to slavery, even in the Moscow press.⁹

¹ Likewise, the terms South Korea and ROK (Republic of Korea) are used interchangeably here

² Lohman, D., *North Korea: A Potential Refugee Crisis?*, WRITENET for UNHCR/CDR, October 1996 (UNHCR REF WORLD Databases)

³ Foster-Carter, A., *North Korea: Prospects, Scenarios, and Implications*, WRITENET for UNHCR/CDR, March 1999 (UNHCR REF WORLD Databases)

⁴ Foster-Carter, A., *The Prospects for North Korea: Implications for Refugee Flows*, WRITENET for UNHCR/CDR, September 2000 (UNHCR REF WORLD Databases)

⁵ Kirk, D., North Offers to Resume Talks with South Korea, *International Herald Tribune*, 3 September 2001

⁶ Kirk, D., Refugee Aid Groups Say Seoul Is Playing Politics, *International Herald Tribune*, 28 June 2001

⁷ Kirk, D., Fleeing North Koreans Find No Refuge in China, *International Herald Tribune*, 26 July 2001

⁸ Larkin, J., Refugees in Purgatory, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 September 2001; Rennie, D., Terror Faces Starving Who Flee to China, *Daily Telegraph* [London], 1 September 2001

⁹ Whittell, G., Kim Sells Workers to Gulags in Debt Deal, *The Times* [London], 6 August 2001; Startseva, A. and Korchagina, V., Pyongyang Pays Russia with Free Labor, *Moscow Times*, 6 August 2001; Korchagina, V., Serfdom Alive and Well in Russia, *Moscow Times*, 10 August 2001

These two trends may also interact. As noted in our last report, a painful paradox of the sunshine policy was that refugee and other DPRK human rights issues received short shrift. For South Korea, both the tactics and pieties of dialogue (respect for each other's systems, and so forth) prompted a desire to seek common ground and begin with easier rather than thorny issues. Seoul is also at pains not to antagonize China. Hence even Kim Dae-jung, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as a life-long democrat, says that "the time is not ripe to raise the issue of [DPRK] human rights yet".¹⁰

For the US, meanwhile, which under Clinton was North Korea's other main interlocutor, security issues were paramount. Washington's agenda was headed first by nuclear concerns, and more recently missiles; a deal was done on the former, and almost on the latter.¹¹ So although the US officially noted human rights violations, including refugee issues, it has hardly raised them in its dialogue with Pyongyang.¹²

But the reverse also applies. If the effort to engage North Korea remains in abeyance or definitively breaks down, there is less reason to tread delicately. US Republicans are basically hostile to the DPRK, and in opposition were critical of Clinton's alleged appeasement of Pyongyang.¹³ Now South Korea in turn faces a presidential election in a little over a year. This may well be won by the conservative opposition Grand National Party (GNP), which likewise accuses Kim Dae-jung of appeasement. So by early 2003 the political climate around the peninsula could well revert to the hostility of the Cold War era. The sunshine era, rather than a new turn, may turn out to have been an interlude: a brief window of opportunity, which is now closing.¹⁴

A harsher atmosphere has its own dangers, but may make interlocutors less inhibited in raising the plight of refugees, even if this antagonizes Pyongyang. Even so, *raison d'état* will still set limits. Not only China, but also Russia, will continue to sustain the DPRK so as to avert the risks that would arise were it to collapse—including refugee flows dwarfing any seen so far, a prospect equally unpalatable to South Korea.

Meanwhile, there is little sign that the factors which have driven North Koreans to cross into China in recent years will cease to apply. The DPRK's food shortage looks increasingly endemic.¹⁵ Tighter controls and harsher punishment may check the flows; but they might also backfire. The increasing body of case material suggests that while first time border crossers are economic migrants who simply want to eat, subsequent brutalization of those repatriated by China turns many against their country's regime.¹⁶ While the DPRK remains largely impervious to human rights arguments as such, Kim Jong-il would do well to ponder if he is not thereby sowing dragon's teeth and putting at risk the DPRK's hitherto remarkable political solidity and stability.

The rest of this paper elaborates on these issues. After brief updates on political developments in the past year and the position of refugees, we look at the perspectives and policy choices facing each of the main states involved—North and South Korea, China and Russia, and also the US, Japan, and the EU—and try to predict their likely responses over the next two to three years. As before, this entails thinking through a complex set of relationships—between short and long term effects, politics and economics, domestic and external trends, individual rights and *raison d'état*, and more—in a context where unknowns abound, and the practical and moral dilemmas facing concerned participants, not least UNHCR, are acute. There are no easy answers, but it is hoped that this paper may be of some small help in illuminating, if not unravelling, the political knots that tightly bind the human tragedy of North Korean refugees.

¹⁰ Republic of Korea, Ministry of Unification, *Peace and Cooperation: White Paper on Korean Unification 2001*, Seoul, 2001, p. 165

¹¹ Gordon, M.R., How Politics Sank Accord on Missiles with North Korea, *New York Times*, 6 March 2001; Sigal, L.V., Bush's Tough Line on North Korea Is Dangerous, *International Herald Tribune*, 8 May 2001

¹² United States, Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2000: Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, Washington, February 2001

¹³ United States, Congress, North Korea Advisory Group, *Report to the Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives*, Washington, November 1999, <http://www.house.gov/international-relations/nkag.report.htm> [accessed 5 September 2001]

¹⁴ Du Mars, R.D., The Deep Freeze, *Asiaweek*, 25 August 2001

¹⁵ Reuters, T. Vidaillet, N. Korea Seen Relying on Food Aid for Years, 21 August 2001

¹⁶ See the—overlapping—"Testimonies" in *The Chosun Journal*, <http://www.chosunjournal.com> [accessed 5 September 2001] and "Witness Accounts" at the website of Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights [NKHR], <http://www.nkhumanrights.or.kr/index-eng1.html> [accessed 5 September 2001]

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

2.1. Political Developments

The past year has seen contrary trends. From mid-2000 until early 2001, engagement prevailed. Following the June 2000 Pyongyang summit, the two Koreas embarked on a wide-ranging dialogue: ministerial meetings, family reunions, economic talks, and the restoring of road and rail links across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In October Madeleine Albright became the first US Secretary of State ever to visit the DPRK. Bill Clinton was ready to follow, but an agreement to curb North Korean missiles foundered on verification problems. The EU and most of its member states recognized the DPRK, leaving only France and Ireland without full diplomatic ties.¹⁷ In May a top-level EU delegation visited Pyongyang and met Kim Jong-il. The ever less reclusive “dear leader” in January paid his second visit to China in eight months: a business-oriented tour of Shanghai which raised hopes that he might at last embrace market reforms. This summer he visited Moscow—by train, taking over three weeks.

But reforms have not been forthcoming; and since March, Pyongyang has used the Bush administration’s initial hostility as a pretext to suspend all official contacts with Seoul. Some were already in trouble: the North had hardly begun work on its side of the new road-rail link. However, unlike in past ups and downs, business and civilian exchanges continue. The South donated fertilizer as a goodwill gesture; the North responded by sending merchant ships into Southern waters, angering Southern hawks.¹⁸ Kim Dae-jung was further weakened in August, when a few of a group of unification activists allowed to visit Pyongyang expressed embarrassingly pro-North views.¹⁹ This prompted a political crisis, and Kim’s coalition partners joined the opposition to pass a vote dismissing the unification minister Lim Dong-won, architect of the sunshine policy.²⁰ Though this had no binding force, Lim resigned, as did the entire cabinet. As of early September, the political scene in Seoul was one of discord and turmoil.

North Korea’s sudden offer on 2 September to resume talks did not save Lim, and it is uncertain if it can revive a peace process which had begun to look doomed. The test will be if the North not only re-opens all the various channels currently frozen, but is ready to make substantive progress: completing the rail link, increasing the scope of family reunions, resuming military talks, and above all proceeds with Kim Jong-il’s long-delayed return visit to Seoul. Also, it is not clear if Pyongyang is also prepared to sit down with the US, which since June has said it is now ready for unconditional talks. Jiang Zemin, who on 3 September became the first Chinese leader to visit the DPRK in a decade, will press Kim Jong-il to return to serious dialogue abroad and get on with economic reforms at home.²¹ But there is no guarantee that future progress will be more sustained than in the past. (The positions of these various interlocutors are analyzed more fully in Section 3, below.)

2.2. Refugees: A Higher Profile

As to refugee issues, the underlying situation has not changed greatly in the past year. North Korea remains unable or unwilling to feed all its people, prompting thousands—as ever, exact numbers are in dispute: estimates range from 10,000 to 500,000, with a figure of at least 100,000 plausible—to cross into China in search of food or work, especially from the north-eastern province of Hamgyong-pukto (North Hamgyong). Most are thus initially economic migrants intending to return; some go back and forth several times. Their ability to do this varies, as neither government is consistent in how it treats them (except in regarding them as illegal). As throughout the period since 1995 when large-scale movement began, the past year has brought contradictory reports of crackdowns and loosening up, on both sides of the border.²² Since this summer it seems clear that China at least is now adopting a much tougher policy, both towards North Korean migrants and those in the local ethnic Korean communities in north-east China who help and harbour

¹⁷For fuller details, see the present author’s quarterly updates of inter-Korean ties and annual surveys of North Korea’s wider diplomacy in *Comparative Connections: an E-journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations*, <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/ccejournal.html>. Specifically: Foster-Carter, A., *States Stalled: Business As Usual?*, Second Quarter, 2001; *Will All Things Go Well? Ups and Downs in the New Inter-Korean Normality*, First Quarter, 2001; *New Millennium, New North Korea?*, Fourth Quarter, 2000

¹⁸See a typical editorial in Seoul’s leading conservative daily. This Kind of Military, *Chosun Ilbo*, 15 June 2001

¹⁹A Delegation of Loose Cannon, *Chosun Ilbo*, 19 August 2001

²⁰Assembly Passes No-Confidence Resolution on Lim, *Chosun Ilbo*, 3 September 2001

²¹Associated Press, N. Korea Hails China President’s Visit, 3 September 2001

²²Punishment of North Korean Refugees Eased, *Chosun Ilbo*, 13 November 2000

them.²³ This can only worsen an already precarious existence, with exploitation and abuse (e.g. of young women) endemic.²⁴

Amid these fluctuations, five trends are discernible. First, harsh punishment inflicted on some returnees turns them from merely hungry into angry enemies of the regime, who escape again and denounce Kim Jong-il.²⁵ If they were not political refugees first time around, they thus become—or are made—so. Second, there is a greater variety and systematization of lengthy and arduous secondary escape routes out of China into fourth countries like Mongolia and Thailand, where ROK embassies may assist as they dare not in China.²⁶ Third, such underground railroads are facilitated by a growing network of South Korean and other NGOs, often religious in inspiration.²⁷ Fourth, despite all obstacles the number who make it to South Korea is growing fast—albeit still tiny by former German or most other global comparative standards.²⁸

Fifth, all this is gaining wider publicity. The incident of “Gilsu’s family”, for whose successful escape more than one NGO has claimed credit, may well inspire others to attempt similarly dramatic and attention-grabbing gestures.²⁹ Press and TV coverage of North Korean refugees has increased during the past year, as has the number and quality of Internet websites devoted to this and other DPRK human rights issues.³⁰ While as ever media interest may wax and wane, it is unlikely to go away; especially since the readiness of governments too to take up this cause will grow, as a fading peace process makes them less inclined to give Kim Jong-il the benefit of the doubt.

2.3. Chinese Koreans: Not So Stable?

While this report’s focus is on North Korean refugees, one must add that their hosts—themselves descended from migrants who crossed the same border from the 1860s onwards, to escape feudal and Japanese colonial oppression and poverty—are also on the move. The two million ethnic Koreans in north-east China, the largest of the many Korean diaspora groups, are no longer the stable community and model minority they once were. Since China and the ROK opened relations in 1992, many have gone to work in South Korea, mostly illegally. As often, individual gain (itself uncertain, due to greedy or cheating brokers and low wages) is communal loss: villages depopulated, farms abandoned, falling school rolls.³¹ This, as well as Chinese state repression, must affect the ability of Chinese-Koreans to aid North Korean refugees. Their fates are entwined in another way: one recent boatload of illegal entrants to South Korea reportedly included both Chinese-Koreans and North Koreans.³²

3. ACTION AND REACTION: FUTURE PROSPECTS

The rest of this paper attempts to look forward, predicting probable political trends in and actions by the countries most concerned. The three main ones are of course North Korea, the source of the problem; China, as the chief primary destination; and South Korea, the main secondary destination. Besides these, Russia may loom larger if renewed DPRK contract labour once again generates both human

²³ Crackdown Intensified on North Korean Escapees in China, *Chosun Ilbo*, 29 July 2001. See also fn 8.

²⁴ For a harrowing first-hand account, see Kim Min-Hee, North Korean Women on the Market, on the NKHR website, <http://www.nkhumanrights.or.kr/index-eng1.html> [accessed 5 September 2001]. Also Amnesty International, *Persecuting the Starving: The Plight of North Koreans Fleeing to China*, London, December 2000.

²⁵ See footnote 16.

²⁶ Wehrfritz, G. and Takayama, H., Riding the Seoul Train, *Newsweek*, 5 March 2001.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Such groups include, in South Korea, NKHR (Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights), <http://www.nkhumanrights.or.kr/index-eng1.html>; in Japan, RENK (Rescue the North Korean People!), <http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/ro/renk/englishhome.htm>; and in the US, Exodus 21, on which see Kang, C., L.A. Group Helps North Koreans Hiding in Asia, *Los Angeles Times*, 21 March 2001, and, Interview with Douglas Shin [of Exodus 21], *Chosun Journal*, 5 May 2001.

²⁸ The total so far this year is over 300, as against 312 for the whole of last year, itself double the 1999 figure, which in turn was double the figure for 1998. The cumulative total from 1953 to 1999 was barely 1,000. See data in Republic of Korea, Ministry of Unification, pp.154 ff.

²⁹ See NKHR and RENK websites (details above in fn 27).

³⁰ See below, Appendix.

³¹ Leaving Collapsing Communities Heading for Money in Korea, *Hankyore Shinmun* [Seoul], 5 January 2001.

³² 108 Illegal Entrants Including NK Defectors Disappeared, *Donga Ilbo*, 2 July 2000.

rights worries and refugees, as it did in the past.³³ Japan too must be considered, as a neighbour with its own fears and interests. Finally, two more distant powers are involved. US policy is crucial for the peninsula's overall evolution; while the EU aspires to acquire a Korean role, and is the only one of these to attach much explicit weight to human rights.

While most of the focus is on states, it is not intended to reify these, let alone imply that they are or should be the sole actors. To the contrary, at least in democracies the interplay between government and public opinion, often mediated by NGOs, is a crucial factor. Nor can a report addressed to UNHCR overlook multilateral bodies.

3.1. North Korea

Predicting change in North Korea gets no easier, but at least we can specify the variables in play. So far, refugee flows are generated mainly by food shortages. Two things might ease these: better harvests, or failing that increased aid (and more equal distribution thereof). The former requires not only more clement weather than the run of flood and drought in recent years, but also structural reforms in farming without which output will remain low and vulnerability to natural disasters high.³⁴ Despite a de facto growing marketization of the rural economy, continuing refusal to officially embrace reform, as happened in China, means that its transformative potential is limited. Many analysts doubt if North Korea—the hillier and colder half of a divided land—can ever be self-sufficient in food, or should even try.³⁵ But the rational option, to export manufactured goods and import food, again means a commitment to economic reform which Kim Jong-il, despite hints, appears reluctant to make.³⁶

If the DPRK cannot feed itself, will others continue to feed it? Remarkably, the World Food Program's operation in North Korea is its largest anywhere. Remarkably too, so far its appeals have largely been met. Yet donor fatigue, seen in failure to fund UNDP's AREP programme for rehabilitation, may well grow if major donors like South Korea and the US feel the political objectives of their aid, to promote détente, are not being met. Then again, the grain purchases required by aid help farmers in both countries; which is one reason why US donations via WFP have continued under Bush.³⁷ On the other hand, the argument made forcefully by Médecins Sans Frontières, that aid merely props up a vile regime which is itself the problem, could in future come to appeal to disillusioned governments as well as NGOs.³⁸ But even in that event China will go on sending grain and other aid, albeit not generously. All in all, the DPRK's food supply in the next few years seems unlikely to differ much from the recent past. Immediate prospects are generally seen as bad, after both drought and floods this year; although a leading South Korean maize expert and regular visitor to the North is optimistic.³⁹

But refugee flows depend on political as well as economic factors: specifically, on the attitude and capacity of the DPRK state. Policing the Tumen river border is not easy, and guards can often be bribed. Then Pyongyang, like Beijing, must make a political decision on how hard it tries to stop or catch migrants, and how it then treats them. Those who have contacted South Koreans or missionaries tend to suffer worst, while teenage children may get off with a caution. There is also periodic easing and tightening of the whole system, presumably in response to political orders

³³ Amnesty International, *Democratic People's Republic of Korea / Russian Federation: Pursuit, Intimidation and Abuse of North Korean Refugees and Workers*, London, September 1996. See also fn 9

³⁴ Catherine Bertini, WFP's executive director, recently acknowledged the structural aspect. See fn 15

³⁵ Noland, M., *Avoiding the Apocalypse: Economic Turmoil on the Korean Peninsula*, Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000

³⁶ Kim Jong-il's visit to Shanghai in January, and some pragmatic new year maxims attributed to him, hinted at reform. See Kim Jong Il Pays Unofficial Visit to China, and, Kim Jong Il Stresses Economic Renovation with New Thinking, *People's Korea*, 25 January 2001, translating remarks published in *Rodong Sinmun*, daily paper of the DPRK's ruling Korean Workers' Party (KWP), 4 January 2001

³⁷ For a recent ROK instance, see S. Korea Mulls Provision of Excess Rice to NK, *Korea Times*, 26 August 2001

³⁸ Terry, F., Feeding the Dictator, *The Guardian* [London], 6 August 2001

³⁹ Agence France Presse, Flood, Drought Will Again Hamper North Korean Harvest, 6 August 2001, quoting WFP. Contrast Crop Yield in North Korea to Hit Record High, *Korea Times*, 25 August 2001, citing Dr Kim Soon-kwon of the International Corn Foundation. Dr Kim seems to be in the minority, but after 20 visits to the DPRK, where he runs an active programme, he is no amateur.

from the centre—or power struggles between different agencies. Importantly, the latter is one way in which the North Korean system is not entirely monolithic.⁴⁰

Nor is it wholly impermeable to pressure.⁴¹ This year the DPRK submitted its first human rights report for 16 years to a UN committee, which was unimpressed.⁴² Sharp questions may discourage any repetition. Some EU states have begun a human rights dialogue with Pyongyang. Yet it shows no sign of liberalizing politically, even to the degree that China has. On the contrary, it may be tightening ideological control.⁴³ Not that such efforts will inevitably succeed. Despite North Korea's enduring against expectations when other communist regimes crumbled, its stability or even survival are not foreordained. Recent reports of a miners' strike in North Hamgyong suggest that unrest cannot be ruled out.⁴⁴ In that context, Kim Jong-il should ponder whether it is wise to sow dragon's teeth by brutalizing refugees, which risks turning hungry but loyal or quietist subjects into fierce enemies of his rule. In the long run a collapse scenario, as in Germany, cannot be ruled out; though the spectre of far larger refugee flows, among other risks, is why both South Korea and China will seek to avoid this.⁴⁵

There is also intra-elite dissent. In Pyongyang as in Seoul, hawks and doves argue it out (albeit not in public), with Kim Jong-il not firmly committed to either camp.⁴⁶ For now, Kim's rule as such seems secure. Next February he turns 60. The hope is that this will be the occasion for a long overdue Party congress, which will proclaim a definitive turn to opening and reform. But the fear is that it will just be yet another extravaganza by a regime which will remain a menace at home and abroad.

3.2. China

In happier days, Sino-North Korean comradeship was described as being "like lips and teeth". Despite the formal warmth of Jiang Zemin's visit, and Kim Jong-il's two trips to China in under a year, the teeth are now gritted. The DPRK causes China many headaches, yet it is also indispensable. Problems include Kim Jong-il's missile ambitions, such as a 1998 rocket launch over Japan which was a major reason for the US push for a national missile defence (NMD); its dire economy as a result of refusing reform, requiring endless aid; and of course the refugee situation, which destabilizes a sensitive frontier area while earning brickbats for Beijing when it cracks down.

On the other hand, North Korea is also a buffer state without which the US troops in South Korea could be on China's very borders. Having finally won the long rivalry with Moscow for primacy in Pyongyang when the USSR collapsed, Beijing will not throw that card away; especially as it manages skilfully to combine this with a new but much more thriving relationship with Seoul. So China will keep North Korea on life-support, whether or not Kim Jong-il heeds its urgent advice to change.

In this context, what are the prospects for pressing China on North Korean refugees? It should be tried anyway, on legal and humanitarian grounds. The PRC should allow UNHCR into border areas, and accept (as it has never yet done) the designation of at least some DPRK fugitives as bona fide refugees. China's desire for global status, as in joining the WTO and hosting the 2008 Olympics, should be leveraged if possible. Yet it is hard to expect much success. The Falun Gong crack-

⁴⁰ Political Security Bureau Acts as Secret Inspector-General, *Chosun Ilbo*, 27 May 2001. See also the section, The Authority of the Military and Security Greatly Weakened, in Kim Young Jun (pseudonym), March 2001: Lives of the People in Chongjin, *Keys Quarterly* [Seoul], Vol. 5, Summer 2001, pp. 54 ff. But Ahn Chol, a young refugee who with help from RENK has twice returned to film secretly inside North Korea, has a contrasting view: "the complete revival of the secret police", Lee Young-hwa, Ahn Chol's Most Recent Video Coverage of North Korea, <http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/ro/renk/ahnnchol/ahnnchol—e.htm> [accessed 10 September 2001]

⁴¹ This may explain a rare reference in the Pyongyang press to refugee issues: global, not local. Serious Problems of World Refugees, *Rodong Sinmun*, 16 July 2001, reported in *JoongAng Ilbo*, 30 July 2001

⁴² Waddington, R., N. Korea Defends Rights Record at U.N., *Japan Today*, 20 July 2001; Kim Mee-Young, Material Evidence Critical for North Korean Human Rights, *Chosun Ilbo*, 5 August 2001

⁴³ Ideology Education Intensified in N.K. in Fear of Outside World, *JoongAng Ilbo*, 29 August 2001

⁴⁴ N.K. Workers May've Gone for Strike, *JoongAng Ilbo*, 28 August 2001

⁴⁵ On collapse and other scenarios, see the present author's 1999 WRITENET report, Ch. 4, and references therein

⁴⁶ For a dramatic report alleging that party secretary Kim Yong-sun, who is associated with dialogue with South Korea, was briefly arrested in March this year, see B. Choi (Choi Won-ki), Special: Dissension On [sic] NK Ranks, *JoongAng Ilbo*, 20 August 2001, translated from *Wolgan JoongAng*, August 2001

down shows a disregard for international concern and humanitarian norms alike. Border areas are especially sensitive; witness Tibet and Xinjiang. Above all, China fears that any encouragement of refugees will destabilize the DPRK and open the floodgates. Still, the point should be put that brutalization may prove just as destabilizing, as well as being inhumane.

3.3. South Korea

South Korea's position is complex. The ROK constitution proclaims jurisdiction over the whole peninsula, and the Constitutional Court has interpreted this to mean that North Koreans are ROK citizens as of right.⁴⁷ Until recently the DPRK's tight controls kept numbers small, and the impermeability of the DMZ—the world's most heavily armed frontier, despite its name—means that only a handful ever come by that route.

The larger numbers entering China from the mid-1990s posed a new challenge. Most do not seek to go to South Korea, at least initially; but those who try get scant official help, for three reasons. The ROK and PRC only established diplomatic ties in 1992, and Seoul is keen to keep Beijing onside as regards North Korea; so it treads carefully on sensitive issues. Refugees must often make arduous journeys to fourth countries like Mongolia and Thailand before ROK embassies will help them (and some refuse even then).⁴⁸ A second reason is a fear shared with China: that too soft a stance might turn the trickle into a deluge, destabilizing the region and overwhelming Seoul's meagre resettlement facilities. Thirdly, Kim Dae-jung's sunshine policy entails a reluctance to antagonize the DPRK; so human rights issues are not on the agenda, for now.

That may change. In December 2002 South Korea will elect a new president, to take office in February 2003. Kim Dae-jung cannot run again. A backlash against North Korea, and on other issues like economic restructuring, means that the conservative opposition Grand National Party (GNP) may well return to power. In opposition, the GNP leader Lee Hoi-chang attacks sunshine as appeasement, *inter alia* for neglecting human rights. What he would do in power is less clear, as two of the above three reasons—fear of a deluge, and of offending China—will still apply. Hence a change of government in Seoul may not necessarily alter the approach to refugees. (Our topic here is North Korean refugees, but the ROK is even less kind to non-Koreans, and is among the countries in the world with the lowest proportion of refugees in relation to its population.⁴⁹)

Such caution also reflects public opinion. As in other literate democracies in an age of mass communication, South Koreans can be roused to temporary euphoria—as with last year's inter-Korean summit—or indignation, as in January 2000 when seven young North Koreans were deported by both Russia and China.⁵⁰ A campaign for international recognition of the plight of refugees attracted 11.8 million signatures, over a quarter of the ROK population.⁵¹ In a culture where civic groups abound, NGOs focussing on this issue are growing more active and visible. Yet sentimental concern for suffering fellow-Koreans has its limits. After half a century of division in which living standards in north and south have diverged vastly, the idea of 22 million impoverished northerners swarming south and swamping their hard-won prosperity is a nightmare for most South Koreans. Even the few who are serious about unification tend to endorse the sunshine approach, and so are loath to raise human rights issues.⁵²

In sum, the ROK's approach to North Korean refugees may not change much in the next few years.⁵³ A more conservative government might be less silent on

⁴⁷ Article 3 of the ROK Constitution reads: "The territory of the Republic of Korea shall consist of the Korean Peninsula and its adjacent islands". Full text in Sung Chul Yang, p. 934 ff

⁴⁸ Larkin, fn 1; NKHR, Activity News April–June 2001, <http://www.nkhumanrights.or.kr/index-eng1.html> [accessed 5 September 2001]

⁴⁹ See United States Committee for Refugees, *Current Report on South Korea*, <http://www.refugees.org/world/countrysrpt/easia-pacific/south-korea.htm> [accessed 12 September 2001]

⁵⁰ See reports and comment in *Korea Now* [Seoul], Vol. 29, No. 2, 29 January 2000, pp. 4, 5, 28–29, 50

⁵¹ Baker, M., N. Korean Refugees Gain a Crusader, but So Far No help", *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 2001

⁵² See fn 10, and also a very interesting article (no author named), Why Are South Korean Progressives So Indifferent to North Korean Human Rights?, *Keys Quarterly*, Vol. 5, Summer 2001, pp. 20–34

⁵³ For thoughtful South Korean discussions of different aspects of refugee and defector issues, see Son, Chu Whan, North Korean Refugees: Problems and Policy Considerations, *Korea Focus*, Vol. 7, No. 3, May–Jun 1999; Lee, Sang Man, Resettlement Training for North Korean Refugees, *Korea Focus*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan–Feb 2001

Northern human rights issues, but it will not rock the boat with China or encourage a deluge.⁵⁴

3.4. *Russia*

When North Korean refugees first became a concern in the 1990s, Russia was a prime focus. Unlike the larger numbers entering China after 1995, this mainly involved workers brought to Siberia under contracts going back to the Soviet period, especially as loggers in the Khabarovsk area. Some escaped, and a few attained refugee status and reached Seoul. They told tales of harsh conditions and virtual extra-territoriality, with DPRK agents operating prisons in the camps and repatriating some offenders.⁵⁵

While adverse publicity helped ensure that the forestry treaty was not renewed at state level, in practice local arrangements continued. Now this issue is once again in the spotlight, with reports during Kim Jong-il's visit to Russia this summer that North Korea is repaying its large debts to the ex-USSR by sending labour. This news prompted hostile comment in a Moscow press already critical of the solicitude shown to the DPRK leader (all stations where he passed were closed, causing much inconvenience), who to many Russians was an eerie reminder of their own past.⁵⁶

Yet even in the Yeltsin era, a few liberals in Moscow were no match for the economic interests of Khabarovsk and other under-populated regions, to whom DPRK labour is a boon. *A fortiori* the balance of forces will be even less favourable under Putin, who is less liberal generally and seeks to rebuild ties with the DPRK as with other Soviet-era allies. So the likelihood is that labour contracts will increase, with little concern for the rights of DPRK workers. On past form, this will generate escapees who will become refugees. UNHCR should therefore prepare for a higher caseload of DPRK fugitives in Russia in the coming years. As with China protests should of course be registered, with perhaps more hope on two grounds: Russia is partly democratic, and is accused not of direct state oppression itself, but of tolerating it by the DPRK on Russian territory. Even so, the chances of effecting improvements may not be high.

3.5. *Japan*

So far the role of Japan has yet to be considered. Japan has a complex relationship to the DPRK. There are no formal diplomatic ties, but geographical proximity and historical links mean substantial *de facto* contacts. These include migration: in the 1950s and 1960s almost 100,000 Koreans left Japan to settle in North Korea. Tokyo was glad to see them go, and tends to regard the 200,000 or so pro-North Koreans who remain in Japan (a further 500,000 are pro-South) as a fifth column for Pyongyang.⁵⁷

As this suggests, anxiety is a keynote of Japanese attitudes to North Korea. Its main focus is the military threat from missiles, suspected nuclear weapons, and incursions. The latter include alleged abductions of Japanese citizens in the 1970s: an issue that tops Tokyo's agenda in intermittent talks with Pyongyang, which naturally denies all knowledge. There is also some concern for the 6,000 Japanese wives who settled in the DPRK with their Korean husbands, of whom a very few have for the first time in four decades been let out for brief home visits in recent years. In both instances it is its own nationals that concern Japan, not human rights in the abstract. As to refugees, some Japanese profess to fear a potential armada of boat people from North Korea. (There has only ever been one boat, in the 1980s; the family went on to South Korea).

On wider policy towards Pyongyang, Tokyo tends to follow its US and South Korean allies. Thus since 1998 it has gone along with engagement, if reluctantly: it was slow to offer fresh food aid, having had scant thanks for generous gifts in the past. But this is now more complex, given the gulf that has opened between an ROK still committed to sunshine (for now) and a more sceptical US. Moreover, Japan

⁵⁴ Sisci, F., Festering Pyongyang Threatens All of Asia, *Asia Times Online*, 10 March 2001, <http://atimes.com/china/CC10Ad02.html>

⁵⁵ See the first-hand account by Lee, Yong-il, The 'Third Area' in Russian Territory, 5 July 2001, on NHKR website, under Witness Accounts, <http://www.nkhumanrights.or.kr/index-eng1.html>. A good overview is Yoon, Yeo-sang, Situation and Protection of North Korean Refugees in Russia, paper presented at the First International Conference on North Korean Human Rights and Refugees, Seoul, 1999 (organized by NKHR). Available at: <http://www.chosunjournal.com/yeosangyoon.html>. See also fn 9 above

⁵⁶ Dalziel, S., Kim Jong-il's Russian Odyssey, 6 August 2001, *BBC News Online*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/europe/newsid-1476000/1476466.stm> [accessed 12 September 2001]

⁵⁷ On Koreans in Japan, see Weiner, M., *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan, 1910-1923*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989; and for an insider's account, Ryang, S., *North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology and Identity*, Boulder CO: Westview, 1997

itself has a new leader who is already enmired in controversy, having antagonized both Koreas by visiting the Yasukuni shrine—which honours war criminals, among others—and allowing a school history textbook which defends Japan's pre-1945 imperialism.⁵⁸

This reinforces Korean and Chinese suspicions that premier Koizumi, portrayed in the west as a liberal reformer, is a right-wing nationalist. That may be unfair; but if by 2003 both the US and ROK have turned more sceptical on the DPRK, Japan is likely to go along. Japanese public opinion is hostile to North Korea, thanks to its August 1998 rocket launch across Japan and the abduction issue. (When in a bizarre incident in May Kim Jong-il's son and his family were caught trying to enter Japan on false passports—ostensibly to see Disneyland—and promptly deported, critics said they should have been kept as bargaining chips for the release of Japanese abductees.)⁵⁹

In sum, even if underlying Japanese hostility to the DPRK becomes more overt in policy in future, this implies no encouragement of North Korean refugees. Japan is unwelcoming to non-ethnic fugitives in general (as is the ROK), and has a legacy of racism towards Koreans in particular.⁶⁰ Insofar as the boat people fantasy lingers—ludicrously: they would head for South Korea—Japan may regard a potential collapse of the DPRK as an even greater threat than the risks posed by North Korea “as is”.

3.6. *The US*

Though too geographically remote from Korea to be directly affected by refugees, the United States has been centrally involved ever since it partitioned the peninsula (“temporarily”) in 1945.⁶¹ With a continuing security alliance and 37,000 troops in the ROK, the US had no diplomatic contacts with the DPRK until the 1990s, when nuclear concerns led to talks that produced the 1994 Agreed Framework (AF). This in turn ushered in a wider dialogue, including on missiles. That was under Clinton. Since George W. Bush succeeded him and professed initial mistrust, North Korea has eschewed contacts, even though President Bush has now changed his mind. The US continues to provide food aid via WFP, and the Pentagon and the Korean People's Army still cooperate in searching for the remains of US soldiers missing in action from the Korean War.⁶²

Bush has also endorsed the AF, criticized by Republicans when in opposition for rewarding North Korea for misbehaviour. But the AF is now approaching a crisis, as new light water reactors (LWRs) cannot be supplied until the DPRK comes back into compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It continues to thwart inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), amid suspicion that plutonium unaccounted for has gone for military use.⁶³

All this is both technical and seemingly remote from refugees. But the nuclear issue almost started a second Korean war in 1994, and retains the capacity to dominate the wider agenda between the DPRK and its various interlocutors. Even if a new nuclear crisis can somehow be avoided, missiles too are high on the US list of concerns; although cynics suggest that Bush is less keen than Clinton to actually resolve this, as North Korea is useful as the potential enemy justifying his missile defence plans. In proposing to resume talks, Bush also annoyed Pyongyang by added conventional force levels as an agenda alongside the familiar pair of nuclear and missile issues.

As this suggests, the US agenda with North Korea is overwhelmingly military, and in particular focussed on weapons of mass destruction. Hence Washington, like other interlocutors, will not needlessly antagonize Pyongyang by raising what it regards as secondary issues, like refugees and human rights in general. In opposition, by contrast, Republicans were happy to denounce the DPRK as a Stalinist tyranny *par excellence*.⁶⁴ Some on the right of the party would still like to do that, and seek to undermine Kim Dae-jung's sunshine policy: for instance by inviting the senior northern defector Hwang Jang-yop, whose attacks on Kim Jong-il are ironically now

⁵⁸ For the view from South Korea, see Seoul Stands Firm, *Korea Now* [Seoul], 25 August 2001

⁵⁹ Deportation Move Decried, *Japan Times*, 5 May 2001; North Korean Leader's Son Travelled Illegally, but in Style, *Japan Times*, 5 May 2001

⁶⁰ United States Committee on Refugees

⁶¹ Cumings, B., *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, New York: W.W.Norton, 1997, pp. 186–7

⁶² Associated Press, J. Christensen, Korea War Soldiers Remains Returned, 24 August 2001

⁶³ IAEA to Adopt Resolution on N.K. Next Month, *Chosun Ilbo*, 31 August 2001; Hart, T., The Impending Agreed Framework Crisis, in G. Jonsson and K. Soffronow (eds.), *Korea: A Stocktaking* Stockholm: Center for Pacific Asia Studies, Stockholm University, 2000

⁶⁴ United States, Congress, North Korea Advisory Group

muzzled in Seoul, to speak in Washington.⁶⁵ On this view, North Korea should be shunned like Cuba or Iraq: meaning refugees are encouraged, at least in theory. But as this has failed to bring down either regime, pragmatic Republicans see no gain in treating the DPRK the same way; especially against the (current) wishes of their allies in Seoul.⁶⁶ Hence Bush's shift from a hawkish to a more moderate stance. Still, if Pyongyang refuses overtures or reverts to provocation, the hawks may gain ground.

The same divide animates Republican views of China, which in turn affects policy on Korea. To the extent that again, after initial hard words, the administration now seeks to improve relations with Beijing, Washington is unlikely to criticize loudly how China treats North Korean refugees: an issue anyway of lower political salience in the US than others with more powerful lobbies, like Tibet. All in all, the US cannot be expected to prioritize refugee issues in its dealings with the DPRK in the years ahead.

3.7. The EU

Finally, mention should be made of the European Union (EU). As noted above, in the past year most EU members and the EU itself have opened formal relations with the DPRK. Moreover, many of these new interlocutors specify human rights as among the issues they plan to raise with Pyongyang.⁶⁷ Conversely, human rights concerns are said to be one reason why France so far chooses not to go along with the trend. The EU is also a board member of KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization), the consortium set up under the AF to supply LWRs to North Korea.⁶⁸

The decision to recognize the DPRK was partly made in deference to Kim Dae-jung, as its timing—around the third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Seoul in October 2000—suggests. Similarly, sending a high-level EU mission to Pyongyang in May was also meant to support the sunshine policy, and to signal to Washington to do likewise. Beyond this, Korea is an opportunity for those who favour a more activist EU foreign policy; and in some ways less difficult than places closer to home, like the Balkans or Middle East. Despite strong economic links with South Korea, Europe cannot really be said to be as closely involved in the region as any of the countries mentioned above. Still, it is commendable that at least somebody at state level is prioritizing human rights with the DPRK. One can only await results, perhaps without undue optimism.⁶⁹

4. CONCLUSION

A short paper can only scratch the surface of complex issues. For a fuller discussion, reference is again made to WRITENET's earlier reports, as well as other works cited. In general, the sunshine or engagement phase of reaching out to North Korea is in difficulties and may be over, with darker clouds ahead. In particular, refugee issues are likely to gain a higher profile, for the reasons given in 2.2 above. However, *raison d'état* means that even if South Korea and Japan follow the US in reverting to a more hostile or sceptical approach to the DPRK, they are unlikely to take the confrontation too far. Since none of North Korea's neighbours wants to risk precipitating a mass exodus of refugees—in itself a defensible view, as this would be profoundly destabilizing in every way: politically, socially, economically, and militarily—the much less defensible corollary is that treatment of existing North Korean refugees will continue to range from unhelpful to brutal so as not to encourage greater numbers.

A final analytical point. Methodologically, as already noted, an exercise like this involves thinking through at least four sets of linkages: between short and long term effects, politics and economics, domestic and external trends, and individual rights and *raison d'état*. Besides that quartet, there is also a more substantive triad. As the above discussion has shown, the North Korean refugee issue is closely linked

⁶⁵ The prime mover here is the Defense Forum Foundation, see, <http://defenseforum.org/page9.html>

⁶⁶ A key moderate Republican is Donald Gregg, a former US ambassador in Seoul and Asia adviser to George Bush Sr, who is credited with pushing his son to a less hardline stance towards the DPRK. See Reuters, Hepinstall, S. Experts: US Has Rare Opportunity to Engage N. Korea, 28 August 2001

⁶⁷ For an interesting discussion, see Human Rights Without Frontiers, The Controversial Trip of Belgian Parliamentarians to the Country of Kim Il Song, <http://www.hrwf.net/newhrwf/html/north-korea-interviews.html> [accessed 12 September 2001]

⁶⁸ See KEDO's official website, <http://www.kedo.org> [accessed 12 September 2001]

⁶⁹ The above discussion, and this paper generally, reflect the author's participation over the past year in policy-related seminars in Berlin, Brussels, London, and Paris, which cannot be minuted in more detail.

to two other major DPRK concerns: famine, and human rights. All three raise questions about the culpability of Kim Jong-il's regime, and the reaction of the international community. The former is not in doubt, but what is to be done is less clearcut. Those like MSF, who call for all aid to North Korea to stop, risk not only worsening short-run suffering inside the country, but also thereby increasing refugee flows. If the implicit aim is to bring down the regime, that is grossly irresponsible without very careful thought as to the consequences. Evolution is better than revolution. Most analysts, and above all most Koreans, see a soft-landing scenario, if it can be brought off (a big if), as far preferable to German-style collapse with all its risks and costs.

But one can also tread too softly. Though striving to maintain academic detachment in this paper, on a personal note the suffering of North Korean refugees is a source of considerable emotion. It is intolerable that they are treated as pawns in the *Realpolitik* of inter-state relations, even for laudable ends like the sunshine policy. If no government will stand up for these innocents and their rights, then not just NGOs but also international bodies must do so. UNHCR, as is well known, faces many larger refugee crises elsewhere in the world, as well as budgetary constraints; and is itself not immune from pressures to tread delicately on political matters. It must nonetheless be hoped that ways can be found for more robust and effective aid and advocacy for North Korean refugees than hitherto.

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6. APPENDIX: INTERNET AND OTHER RESOURCES

Since the last WRITENET report on this subject, written a year ago, in September 2000, both the quantity and quality of Internet resources on North Korean refugees and related topics have greatly improved. So as well as the specific references given in footnotes, it may be helpful to list the sites which have been most valuable in writing this report, and thus may be of continuing use to UNHCR in monitoring future developments. Where (as often) a main site is in Korean, the URL given here is to the English-language section. Sites obviously already known to UNHCR, such as the US Committee for Refugees (<http://www.refugees.org>), have been omitted, invaluable though they are. All sites and footnote references were checked during the period 1–12 September 2001.

A. NGO and Academic Sources

Association of North Korean Defectors (in Korean only)
<http://www.nkd.or.kr>

The Chosun Journal
<http://www.chosunjournal.com/>

Despite its name, this site does not seem to be related to the *Chosun Ilbo* journal and sites in South Korea. (Chosun is one Korean word for Korea, used by the DPRK and by the last pre-modern dynasty, but not by the ROK which calls itself Hankuk.). Described as an independent site devoted to human rights in North Korea, it is very comprehensive and well-organized, consisting mainly of links to a wide range of news, analysis, NGOs, and testimonies. Though avowedly partisan, it includes a range of perspectives, and a Forum in which Koreans and others argue issues and strategies back and forth. Highly recommended.

Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights [NKHR]
<http://www.nkhumanrights.or.kr/index—eng1.html>

The leading South Korean NGO in this field. Another very useful site, again raising refugee issues within wider human rights concerns. Publishes a weekly email, *Friends Network Newsletter*, and a quarterly journal, *Life and Human Rights in North Korea*.

Good Friends (Korean Buddhist Sharing Movement)

ROK Buddhist organization, very involved with refugees. English website under reconstruction. The old URL (<http://blue.nownuri.net/?kbsm>) currently redirects you to <http://www.jungto.org/gf>, in Korean only. The parent JungTo Society has an English site (<http://www.jungto.org/english/english.html>), but nothing on refugees as such.

Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF)
<http://www.hrwf.net/newhrwf/html/north—korea—project.html>

Partners NKHR overseas. A succinct Belgian site, offering a European perspective

The Nautilus Institute
<http://www.nautilus.org>

Nautilus is a Berkeley, CA-based NGO specializing in Asian energy, security and environmental issues; and hence with a considerable interest in North Korea, as well as China and elsewhere. Its website is a valuable archive, while its free daily email NAPSNet report and associated special papers are a painless way to keep abreast of the DPRK and other regional issues. The current daily report, with links to a signup page and archives, may be viewed at <http://www.nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/index.html>

Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights [NKNET]

<http://www.nknet.org/enknet/eindex.htm>

Covers similar territory to NKHR. Publishes a quarterly journal, *KEYS*. Of interest as a rare instance of South Korean “progressives”—veterans of the struggle against dictatorship, some formerly pro-Pyongyang—breaking ranks with the rest of the ROK left by insisting on raising North Korean human rights issues, including refugees. A new English website is said to be due for launch by the end of September 2001.

North Korean Studies

<http://north-korea.narod.ru>

An academic site maintained by Leonid Petrov, a Russian scholar currently at the Australian National University. Extremely useful, especially its section on defectors: (<http://north-korea.narod.ru/defectors—new.htm>), including a link to NKHR (<http://north-korea.narod.ru/alliance.htm>) which may be the most convenient way to read NKHR's own news archive. Also good on DPRK-Russia relations.

Rescue the North Korean People! (RENK)

<http://www.bekkoame.ne.jp/ro/renk/englishhome.htm>

An activist group based in Japan. Site is patchy but interesting, including film shot secretly inside North Korea.

B. Media Sources

Chosun Ilbo

<http://nk.chosun.com/english/index.html>

Seoul's leading conservative daily has several sites that cover the DPRK, mostly critically. The above is a site dedicated to North Korean issues. See also its weekly *North Korea Report* (<http://www.chosun.com/english/special/nkreport1031.html>), which each week covers three or four aspects of the DPRK in telling detail, based presumably on defector and/or intelligence sources. Also the *Chosun's* associated monthly magazine homepage (<http://monthly.chosun.com>), though mainly in Korean, includes a number of pertinent items in English e.g:

The Tragic Stories of North Korean Refugees

<http://monthly.chosun.com/html/200003/200003020002—1.html>

The Account of a Korean-Chinese Couple's Recent Visit to North Korea (16 parts)

<http://monthly.chosun.com/html/200003/200003160002—1.html>

A Letter from North Korea

<http://monthly.chosun.com/html/200007/200007030001—1.html>

'North Korea's Auschwitz'—the Inside Story on the No. 14 Detention Center (12 parts)

<http://monthly.chosun.com/html/200006/200006130003—1.html>

JoongAng Ilbo

<http://english.joins.com>

South Korea's other leading daily also has good North Korean coverage, if less well laid out than its rival the *Chosun Ilbo*. Sidebars on the left of the homepage offer a three-way choice: news (<http://english.joins.com/NK/index.asp>); analysis (<http://english.joins.com/NK/ana/index.asp>); and op-ed, i.e. opinion pieces (<http://english.joins.com/NK/col/index.asp>). All are valuable.

Korea Focus

<http://www.kf.or.kr/KoreaFocus>

A bimonthly digest of policy debate and discussion from the ROK press, compiled by the Korea Foundation in Seoul. Available both as print and online. Excellent source, conveying the full range of South Korean debate. Thoughtful coverage of the DPRK, including refugee and human rights issues. A good search facility.

Korea Herald

<http://www.koreaherald.co.kr>

One of Seoul's two English-language dailies

Korea Now

<http://kn.koreaherald.co.kr/>

Fortnightly magazine (print and online) produced by the *Korea Herald*. Korea Now has regular North Korea coverage, usually reflecting government views.

Korea Times

<http://www.koreatimes.co.kr>

English-language daily, Seoul

Yonhap News

<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/services/2000000000.html>

Oddly, the ROK's quasi-official newsagency, whose English site gives only headlines (not stories) for South Korea, has fuller coverage of the North! Click on left sidebars for weekly news on the DPRK, or for (not very up to date) contents list of the monthly journal *Vantage Point*, itself available only by mail. VP is good, though its tone has changed from hard-line to sunshine since Yonhap took it over from Naewoe Press

C. Governmental Sources

C1. ROK

Korea Institute for National Unification [KINU]

<http://www.kinu.or.kr/english/index.html>

The ROK's main official research body on North Korea and unification issues. Its website could be more helpful. KINU includes a Center for North Korean Society and Human Rights, which publishes a very useful annual *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea* (seemingly not available online)

Koreascope

<http://www.koreascope.org/english>

Includes a section on North Korea Today, with a sub-section on human rights: <http://www.koreascope.org/english/sub/2/ks2.htm>. It is not clear how recently this has been updated. Also, while there is a list of video materials, most with trenchant titles, the video clips are no longer available (<http://www.koreascope.org/english/sub/vdo/kvc.htm>)

Ministry of Unification

<http://www.unikorea.go.kr/eng/index.php>

National Intelligence Service

<http://www.nis.go.kr/english>

The NIS has several substantial sections on North Korea, including testimonies by defectors (<http://www.nis.go.kr/english/democratic/defector—index.html>); but none seemingly more recent than May 2000.

C2. DPRK

Although no websites yet exist with the DPRK's allocated suffix (.kp) actually inside North Korea, the following have quasi-official status in varying degrees:

DPRK Infobank

<http://www.english.dprkorea.com>

This site, produced by the Pan-Pacific Economic Development Association of Korean Nationals, is newer and far more professional than the others listed here, if no more informative on refugees. However, to get very far entails paying a US\$300 membership fee.

Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)

<http://www.kcna.co.jp>

The People's Korea

<http://www.korea-np.co.jp/pk>

This site is maintained by pro-North Koreans in Japan

